

ESF RESEARCH CONFERENCES

Rapporteur Report

Partnership:	ESF-EMBO
Conference Title:	B Cells and Protection: Back to Basics
Dates:	12 - 17 June 2011
Chair:	Prof. Rita Carsetti
Rapporteur:	Martin Röllinghoff

General Comments

Any general comments you might have concerning the conference, your role, the scientific area covered by this conference, etc.

This very informative ESF-EMBO Symposium on B cells was directed by Prof. Rita Carsetti, Rome, IT, together with Prof. Deborah K. Dunn-Walters, London, UK.

More than 80 participants out of 23 countries attended the meeting (53 Post-Docs and senior scientists, and 26 invited speakers). The delegates were mostly from Europe, but also from Israel, USA, Canada, Brazil, Korea, Milawi and Russia.

Prof. Carsetti, together with his dedicated colleagues, and supported by a highly respected international faculty, has come up with an excellent program of lectures and short talks, that covered all major areas of B cells and defense against bacteria, fungi and viruses..

Quality of Scientific Programme, Presentations and Discussion

Comments on the balance and scope of the scientific programme, the scientific quality of the presentations and discussions.

The meeting started off with a short presentation of ESF by the rapporteur.

Thereafter, 7 sessions covered the following topics:

- The host-microbe relationship: a long-standing armed peace
- B cell diversity: "B" different
- B cell development and function: the regulatory universe
- B cell development and function: the art of integrating signals
- New technologies for old problems
- When things go wrong: tumours and diseases

The sessions included 10 selected related short 15-minute talks of younger scientists in addition of presenting their posters in the poster sessions. The best talk given by Nancy So from Canada was honoured by a special award. Altogether more than 40 posters were on display.

Of great interest to all scientists were the vivid discussions in particular by the younger participants after the talks and during coffee breaks and siestas. The outstanding faculty by their way of discussing the various topics was able to attract and to fascinate the participants.

Informal Networking and Exchange; Atmosphere

Was the schedule and the atmosphere conducive to an easy exchange of information? Was there time and space for an informal discussion? Were younger researchers integrated?

The Symposium took place at the Eden Roc Hotel set in a lovely bay of Costa Brava in Sant Feliu. Accommodation was very good and catering excellent. Great advantage was that delegates could use the Internet (WI-FI) without additional cost. In the hotel were available equipments for sporting activities (outdoor and indoor swimming pools and a small fitness centre). These facilities were free of charge to the delegates and provided a good opportunity to network as well as relax during evenings.

Outlook and Future Developments

Will new collaborations emerge from this conference? (How) could the conference outcomes be utilized further? Are there suitable (ESF) programmes or instruments to further the work of the conference?

At the end of the Symposium the clear interest and necessity was aired, that in three years time a further ESF- EMBO Symposium on B cells should take place, as so many burning questions are still open and there exists no other conference series that focuses on B cells and is open to all interested European scientists.

Summary & Overall Assessment

Was the conference successful; were its aims achieved?

Altogether, I feel, the Symposium was a great success, because it was very well organized. The faculty was extremely well selected. Two points became very obvious, first: how well the young people discussed and interacted and second: how many female scientists took active part in the meeting. Certainly there was no gender issue. At the end of symposium a questionnaire was distributed to rank the lecturers, the posters, the poster sessions, accommodation, catering, etc.

The Chair and the Co-Chair must be congratulated as they were able to rise some additional sponsor-money that allowed to support several PhD-students to attend, which otherwise would have not been able to do so. Thus the modest ESF money was well spent.