

EFIS-EJI supported events: Courses, Schools, Symposia and Meetings with a European flavour

I was elected EFIS president in 2009 and my main goals since then have been to strengthen the cooperation between the National Immunological Societies that constitute EFIS, to continue to develop the triannual European Congress of Immunology (ECI) [1] building on the success of the past ECIs held in Paris and Berlin in 2006 [2] and 2009 [3] respectively, to develop bridges between basic and clinical immunology [4, 5] and to create innovative communication tools that bring immunology to the public in an accessible manner [4, 6].

One of the major tasks of EFIS is to financially support the organization of courses and meetings among immunologists within Europe [7], thereby increasing and promoting scientific exchange. Given the rapid and constant progression in both knowledge and technical advances that occur in our discipline, I believe that this is an extremely important role for our Federation. Together with the *European Journal of Immunology* (EJI), we offer financial support for meetings and courses organized by our members [7] (for further information, visit the EFIS website, <http://www.efis.org>).

The EFIS board receives many applications for this support and there are a series of meetings that we regularly support, including the EFIS-EJI Intensive Course in Clinical Immunology [4], the EFIS-EJI Symposium IMPULSE (formerly known as the EFIS-EJI Symposium Signals and Signal Processing in the Immune System) [8], the EFIS-EJI Tatra Conference [9], the EFIS-EJI South East European Immunology School (SEEIS), and the EFIS-EJI Ruggero Ceppellini Advanced School of Immunology [10, 11]. Further details on these conferences are given below. We also occasionally sponsor other meetings, assessing the applications received according to the excellence of the conference programme, the novelty and the frequency of the meetings. To increase the visibility of this important work and

support by EFIS and EJI, the EFIS Board recently defined a series of conditions that these EFIS-EJI courses/meetings must fulfill, such as clear deadlines for establishment of the course/meeting website, the use of EFIS and EJI logos on the website and other promotional material, and a post-meeting report, which is typically published in EJI e.g. [9–11].

Our Federation comprises about 12 000 members from 31 National Immunological Societies scattered all over Europe. To further disseminate immunological knowledge and exchange in the Mediterranean area, the EFIS board has, this year, initiated a new course, the EFIS-EJI course in Basic and Translational Immunology (<http://www.immunology2011.it/satelliteevents.asp>). This will be held as a satellite meeting of the Joint Annual Meeting of the Italian and German Societies of Immunology in Riccione, Italy (<http://www.immunology2011.it>).

Figure 1 summarizes the regularly sponsored EFIS-EJI courses/meetings. It clearly identifies a lack around the Mediterranean Sea and in Northern/Eastern Europe and, over the coming years, the EFIS Board will put its efforts into filling these gaps, thereby by holding EFIS-EJI courses throughout Europe, most likely on a rotation basis. For those interested in applying for EFIS-EJI support for meetings/courses, please visit the relevant section on the EFIS website (<https://www.efis.org/meetings/efis-eji-meeting-support/efis-eji-meeting-support.html>). The next deadline for applications is 10 November 2011. Finally, it should be noted that, in addition to financially supporting courses/meetings, EFIS also funds bursaries for young scientists to attend events e.g. the International Congress of Immunology [12]. Such funding is decided internally by the EFIS Board and there is no formal application procedure.

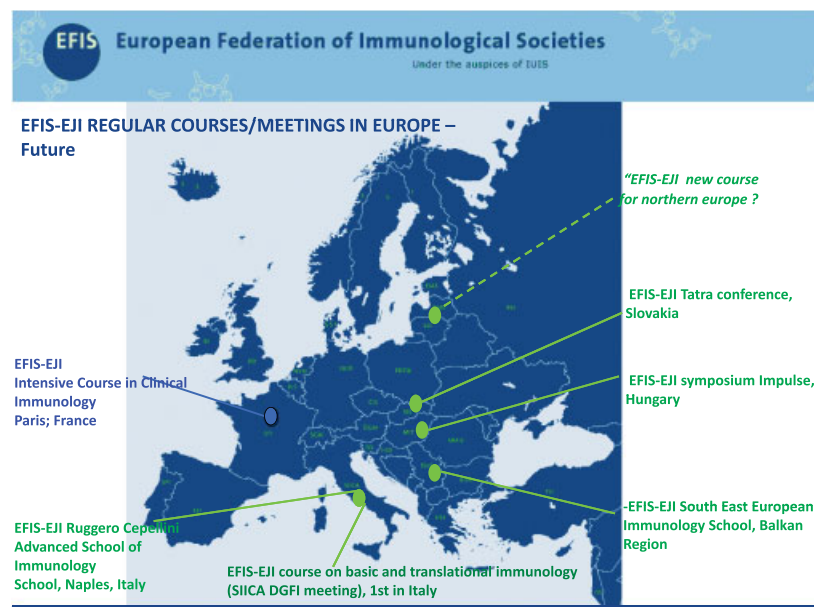


Figure 1. Meetings regularly sponsored by EFIS-EJI and potential new meetings.

With all these initiatives, EFIS plans to make European immunology as collaborative and dynamic as possible.

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References

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EFI-EJI Intensive Course in Clinical Immunology

The EFI-EJI Intensive Course in Clinical Immunology, is an annual educational course established by EFIS in 2010 that covers the principles and practice of innovative immunology-based therapies. The aim is to provide high quality exposure to immunology, focusing on new advances in the field of immune intervention of chronic diseases (cancer, autoimmune diseases, transplantation, allergy).

The program covers the

- (i) basic principles of the immune system and immune-mediated diseases
- (ii) mechanisms and monitoring of innovative immunologically-based therapies
- (iii) recent developments of immune-based pathologies.

Lectures are given by top level European academics in immunology. The target audience (150 maximum) comprises, but is not limited to, clinical immunologists, allergists, dermatologists, transplant experts, rheumatologists, and gastroenterologists. It includes clinicians and scientists from academia, the pharmaceutical industry and biotechnology companies whose research is aimed at moving immunological discoveries from the bench to clinical trials. In order to provide a high level of interaction with the lecturers, ample time is allocated for discussions during “tutorial” and “poster” sessions.

ECME and EMEA accreditation are validated annually and the course can be validated by Paris Descartes University for PhD training programmes (3ECTS).

The next course will be at the Cordeliers Research Center, Paris from **28 to 30 November 2011**.

For further information, visit http://www.colloquium.eu/site/-11EFIS?Current_rec_ID=8

EFIS-EJI IMPULSE Symposium

Immune-related Pathologies: Understanding Leukocyte Signaling and Emerging therapies (IMPULSE) builds upon the highly successful EFIS-EJI conference series *Signals and Signal Processing in the Immune System (SASPITIS)* which has been held bi-annually for more than 20 years in Hungary and, among other notable highlights, was the forum for coining the terms ITAM and ITIM.

There is a great effort to identify new targetable molecules that can be used to cure cancer, immunologic disorders, infectious diseases and other still unmet medical needs. In addition, there is substantial progress in identifying small molecules that influence signaling-cascades and fine-tune the effector functions of IgG in order to optimize and personalize antibody therapy. The biannual EFIS-EJI symposium IMPULSE offers an excellent opportunity to meet basic and clinical scientists and discuss recent achievements in understanding immunological processes behind the pathogenesis, diagnosis and therapy of human diseases.

The symposium focuses on the following topics:

- (i) understanding leukocyte signaling pathways and their contribution to human disease
- (ii) therapeutic targeting of leukocyte signal transduction pathways
- (iii) functions of immunoglobulins as membrane receptors and soluble effector molecules
- (iv) rational development and application of therapeutic antibodies.

The next meeting will be held in the Thermal Hotel, Visegrad, Hungary from **3 to 6 September, 2011**.

For further information, visit <http://www.impulse.org.hu/>

EFIS-EJI Tatra Conference

Since its first meeting in 1994, the aim of this Conference has been to allow young scientists and trainees from the Central/Eastern European region to meet with world-class scientists and to have the opportunity, not only to listen to their cutting-edge lectures, but also to continue with rather informal discussions during the mid-day hiking trips to the surrounding spectacular mountains, rustic villages or castle ruins. Since 1998, the Tatra Conference has been held as a regular EFIS meeting, receiving monetary support by way of the EFIS-EJI partnership, leading it to be called the EFIS-EJI Tatra Immunology conference. It is held in the Tatra Mountains (Slovakia) every two years, with a schedule that includes morning and late-afternoon lectures by invited speakers, poster presentations by other participants (Ph.D. students, postdocs, medical residents) and informal discussions, all combined with extended midday recreational activities. The three-day scientific programme has sessions ranging from fundamental to clinical immunology with, in the past few meetings, the major goal being to document the importance of basic and clinical research for the development of novel diagnostic and therapeutic strategies in clinical medicine. The number of participants is limited to approximately 120. The 9th EFIS- EJI Tatra Immunology Conference was held at Štrbské Pleso in the High Tatra Mountains, Slovakia from September 4 to 8, 2010.

The EFIS-EJI Tatra Immunology Conference has become a tradition and provides an important get-to-know opportunity for the young immunology trainees from not only the Central/Eastern Europe region but beyond.

The next conference is planned for **June 2012**.

For further information, visit <http://www.img.cas.cz/tatra/>

EFIS-EJI South East European Immunology School (SEEIS)

The EFIS-EJI South East European Immunology School (SEEIS) primarily aims to teach modern immunology to young immunologists from South East Europe, i.e. Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro, the Kosovo region, Albania and Macedonia, as well as Bulgaria and Romania. The first school was held in Ohrid, Macedonia, in 2009, the second in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in 2010. This year, the third one will be held from October 1 to 4 in Arandjelovac, a small city near Belgrade, Serbia. In this Balkan region, both basic immunological research and clinical immunology are not well developed and help is needed to establish state-of-the-art immunology. Another aim is to foster contact of the young participants with other immunologists both from the region as well as from abroad. Given that, two decades ago, this region experienced wars between some of the countries from which the participants will come, the common interest in immunology is a bridge for mutual communication. Therefore, the presentation of their work by the young investigators themselves is an important part of the school and the two schools that have already taken have met with much success in accomplishing this.

The next school will be held in Arandjelovac, Serbia from **1 to 4 October 2011**.

For further information, visit <http://www.bnitm.de/seeis2011>

EFIS-EJI Ruggero Ceppellini Advanced School of Immunology

The EFIS-EJI Ruggero Ceppellini Advanced School of Immunology, founded 20 years ago, is a non-profit international scientific association aimed at the continuing education in immunology of researchers, PhD students, and medical graduates. The school organizes courses focused on state-of-the-art issues in immunology. These courses are sponsored by EFIS-EJI and have been extremely successful in promoting close interactions between participants and fellow instructors. The number of participants is limited to 80 and all participants and instructors stay at the same place annually to further increase the informal and interactive atmosphere. The school takes place in the vicinity of Naples, known for its impressive history. Stefan H. E. Kaufmann, Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology, the current President of the International Union of Immunological Societies, is the current Director and Silvia Fontana-Zappacosta is the current President of the school.

The next EFIS – EJI Ruggero Ceppellini Advanced School of Immunology will take place in Sorrento, Italy, **26–29 October 2011** under the course directorship of Robert Lechler. Deadline for applications is **15 October 2011**.

For further information, visit <http://www.ceppellini.it/>