EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF CLINICAL CHEMISTRY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

EuroLabNews

THE EFLM BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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EFLM Connects National Societies of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine and Creates a Platform for all European "Specialists in Laboratory Medicine"

In this issue

THE EFLM EXECUTIVE BOARD INFORMS

The EFLM commitment towards its National Societies

Reported by Tomris Ozben, EFLM President

2022 has been the year for EFLM to restart activities and services after the COVID era. EFLM has joined forces to offer its National Society Members a strong commitment to make them feel very close to EFLM after the past two years' of mandatory restrictions.

I am extremely grateful to all those involved in the EFLM activities brought to our National Societies in 2022: the EFLM Executive Board Members, the EFLM Officers and the EFLM Office staff.

We do hope that EFLM National Societies have appreciated these activities and will continue to be involved with EFLM and get benefit of the EFLM annual activities, offers and supports. We are closer to you than you expect!

Below what EFLM has performed specifically for EFLM National Societies in 2022:

To be continued on page 2

Foreword

Reported by Harjit Pal Bhattoa, Editor EFLM EuroLabNews

First and foremost, the EuroLabNews Team wish you all a very prosperous Happy New Year! The EFLM President Tomris Ozben highlights the various endeavours of the EFLM towards its National Societies. Furthermore, she presents the EFLM strategic and action plan 2022-2023. Daria Pasalic interviews senior laboratory colleague Elizabeta Topic. Coffee with the President column runs 4 interviews with prominent EFLM personalities. EFLM bursary recipient Judit Gonda reports on her EFLMLabX training experience in Brussels. Silvia Terragni from the EFLM Office announces vacancies in functional units. Ales Kvasnicka summarizes past and upcoming EFLM events. French and Serbian Societies report changing of the guard. The Serbian, Turkish and Spanish societies report on their latest ventures, conferences and activities. Under its regular column, the IFCC corner presents global perspectives in Laboratory Medicine. The Calendar of Events lists all major happenings in our field.

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EFLM POSTGRADUATE COURSE "BIOSTATISTICS IN LABORATORY MEDICINE"

"Following the great demand for educational tools from EFLM National Societies, the EFLM Executive Board has committed the EFLM Education & Training Committee to repeat the initiative of the EFLM Postgraduate Course to propose to EFLM National Societies as a "turnkey course", i.e. with a defined structured programme and designated speakers' team.

In 2022, it was proposed to EFLM National Societies the Course "Biostatistics in Laboratory Medicine" organized by the WG on Congresses and Postgraduate Education under the chairmanship of **Prof. Eser Sozmen.** The course was structured on 2 days and delivered by **Prof. Matteo Vidali** and **Prof. Andrea Padoan (Italy).**

Following the call for applications, 9 requests were received, and it was decided to select the application from the **Portuguese Society of Clinical Chemistry, Genetics and Laboratory Medicine** and one from the **Macedonian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine** (this latter one in the frame of the «EFLM Scholarship Programme in memory of Prof. Vic Blaton). For these two hosting National Societies, besides the educational contents of the course, EFLM offers also the travel of the Speakers' Team travelling to Lisbon and Skopje.

EFLM RESEARCH GRANT

The EFLM Scientific Research Grant has been established to promote science and facilitate research in Laboratory Medicine in Europe. Every year, **two grants of the maximum amount of EUR 10.000** each are awarded, one for an applicant coming from a country belonging "Vic Blaton" scholarship program and the other for an applicant coming from any other country in Europe.

For 2022, 21 applications were received and were evaluated by a committee composed of the Chair of the EFLM Science Committee, Prof. Michel Langlois, the Chair of the EFLM Education and Training Committee, Prof. Daria Pasalic, and one member of EFLM Executive Board, Prof. Dalius Vitkus.

The evaluation process was conducted according to the criteria established by the EFLM Executive Board in 2021.

The selected applications which received the grant of EUR 10.000 for 2022 are those from:

- **Anna CAROBENE, Italy**
  "EuBIVAS: biological variation data for bone turnover and metabolism biomarkers"
- **Katerina TOSHESKA-TRAJKOVSKA, North Macedonia**
  "Impact of oxidized low density lipoportein (oxLDL) and anti-oxLDL antibodies on cardiovascular health"

The EFLM Research Grants' initiative is repeated every year. Click here to know more.

EFLM INITIATIVE "INVITE AN EFLM EXECUTIVE BOARD REPRESENTATIVE AT YOUR NATIONAL SOCIETY CONGRESS"

This EFLM initiative aims to create a stronger relationship between EFLM and the National Society. Despite usually only 5 applications are supported every year, in 2022 all applications received were supported because the programme was suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemics.

1. **SERBIA - Belgrade, 12-14 September 2022**
   EB rep: Prof. Mario PLEBANI
   XXII Serbian Congress of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine with international participation & 16th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan region "Laboratory Medicine Management: Leadership Skills for Effective Laboratory
2. **SLOVENIA - Portoroz, 19-20 September 2022**
   EB rep: Prof. Snezana JOVICIC
   6th Slovenian Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine
3. **SWEDEN - Jonkoping, 20-22 September 2022**
   EB rep: Prof. Tomris OZBEN
   Annual Meeting for Clinical Chemistry
4. **ESTONIA - Tallin, 22-24 September 2022**
   EB rep: Prof. Dalius VITKUS
   XVI Baltic Congress in Laboratory Medicine
5. **GREECE - Creete, 2-5 October 2022**
   EB rep: Prof. Mario PLEBANI
   joint Meeting of BCLF, GSCC-CB, AFCB- EFLM, Common Conference
6. **FRANCE - Saint Etienne, 5-7 October 2022**
   EB rep: Prof. Mario PLEBANI (remotely)
   5èmes Journées Francophones de Biologie Médicale (JFBM)
7. **SLOVAK REP - Demanovska Dolina, 9-11 October 2022**
   EB rep: Prof. Tomris OZBEN
   XIV. Congress of Slovak Society of Clinical Biochemistry. During the congress, Honorary Membership of the Slovakia Society was presented to Prof. Ozben and Prof. Sverre Sandberg.
8. **IRELAND - Cork, 14-15 October 2022**
   EB rep: Dr. Pilar FERNANDEZ-CALLE
   44th Annual Conference of the Association of Clinical Biochemists in Ireland (ACBI 2022)
9. **POLAND - Kielce, 19-22 October 2022**
   EB rep: Prof. Mario PLEBANI
   20th PSLD National Congress
10. **TURKEY - Izmir, 26-30 October 2022**
    EB rep: Prof. Klaus KOHSE
    International Biochemistry Congress 2022 // 33th National Biochemistry Congress
11. **UK - London, 8-9 November 2022**
    EB rep: Prof. Tomris OZBEN
    UKMedLab 22. Prof. Ozben delivered and received "International Lecture Award" of the Association of Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine (ACB) during the UKMedLab held in London.
12. **FRANCE - Paris, 1-2 December 2022 -**
    EB rep: Prof. Tomris OZBEN
    JIB 2022

EFLM ACADEMY AWARD

The EFLM Academy award has been created to promote and honour extraordinary individuals who have made substantial and excellence contributions to the education in Laboratory Medicine in Europe.
The award aims to encourage educational activities and recognize the value and importance of education for EFLM. The award is granted annually to the author of the most distinguished educational activity or a project in the past 5 years. Eligible activities are various high quality educational materials, like educational papers, handbooks, books or book chapters, online educational resources, educational courses and workshops. The award winner will receive a trophy and a certificate. As a token of appreciation, the winner will also receive the free registration, travel and accommodation for the EuroMedLab Congress where the award will be presented.
For the Award 2021, 7 nominations were received and were evaluated by an Award Committee, consisting of Janne Cadamuro (Austria), Snezana Jovicic (Serbia; EFLM EB Secretary), and Klaus Kohse (Germany; EFLM EB Treasurer) which decided unanimously that the 2021 EFLM Academy Award should have been bestowed on **Evgenija Homsak, PhD (Slovenia)**. The committee stated that, among the applicants, she showed the most distinguished educational activity in the past 5 years.
The EFLM Academy Award initiative is repeated every year. Click here to know more.

EFLM BURSARY PROGRAMME

In 2022, two EFLM bursary programmes were launched for the following events:
- EFLM Preanalytical Conference 2022 held on-line from 15 to 18 March 2022
- EuroMedLab Congress 2021 held in Munich from 11 to 14 April 2022

For the EFLM Preanalytical Conference 2022 held on-line, 40 free registrations were available but unfortunately only a limited number of applications was received, 19 in total. To get benefits of the free registration were Members from the following EFLM National Societies:
- Albania Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine
- Georgian Laboratory Medicine Association
- Hungarian Society of Laboratory Medicine
- SIBioC - Laboratory Medicine (The Italian Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Clinical Molecular Biology)
- Kosova Association of Clinical Chemistry
- Association of Laboratory Specialists and Organizations «Federation of Laboratory Medicine»
- Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia
- Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine
- Turkish Biochemical Society

For the EuroMedLab Congress 2021 held in Munich from 11 to 14 April 2022, 15 bursaries were available covering registration, travel and accommodation during the Congress. A total of 33 applications were received from the following EFLM National Societies and 15 Members were selected to receive the bursary:
- Albania Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine
- Finnish Society of Clinical Chemistry
- Société Francaise de Biologie Clinique
- Georgian Laboratory Medicine Association
- German Society of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine
- Netherlands Society for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine
- Macedonian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine
- Polish Society for Laboratory Diagnostics
- Romanian Association of Laboratory Medicine
- Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia
- Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine
- Turkish Biochemical Society
- Association of Clinical Chemistry & Laboratory Medicine of Ukraine

3RD EFLM STRATEGIC CONFERENCE "SMART AND GREEN LABORATORIES HOW TO IMPLEMENT IVDR, EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN MEDICAL LABORATORIES?"

The 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference was held on 25-27 May 2022 and completed successfully. More than 1000 scientists have registered to the Conference and listened 60 distinguished outstanding expert Speakers and Chairs all around the world on very important hot topics proposed by the EFLM National Societies, and EFLM Officers. It was free of charge for the EFLM Academy members, All the presentations, discussions, networking, and exhibition have been found by the participants rewarding and worthwhile. The aim of the 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference was to address and discuss recent developments and challenges in our field of profession focusing on important aspects in Laboratory Medicine in which some strategic actions/measures should be taken. All the sessions of the Conference were recorded and are available at the Conference website **"Under Demand".**
Lectures and contributions presented at the Conference will be published in a special issue of the official EFLM Journal soon. Following the Strategic Conference, two new EFLM Functional Units were established and new ones are under preparation.
Related to the EFLM Strategic Conference, I would like to mention also the EFLM Task Force "Green and Sustainable Laboratories" where great importance is given to the role of EFLM National Societies. In fact, each EFLM National Society was asked to nominate a National Representative in the Task Force with the final goal to appoint him/her as EFLM Ambassador for "Green and Sustainable Laboratories".
Thank you for your participation and looking forward to seeing you in future EFLM activities and conferences.

Some pics from EFLM initiative "Invite an EFLM Executive Board Representative at your National Society Congress"

SLOVAK REP - Demanovska Dolina, 9-11 October 2022
EB rep: Prof. Tomris OZBEN and Dr. Hedviga Pivovarníková

IRELAND - Cork, 14-15 October 2022
EB rep: Dr. Pilar FERNANDEZ-CALLE with the EFLM President, Prof. Tomris Ozben

SERBIA - Belgrade, 12-14 September 2022
EB rep: Prof. Mario PLEBANI

SLOVENIA - Portoroz, 19-20 September 2022
EB rep: Prof. Snezana JOVICIC

UK - London, 8-9 November 2022
EB rep: Prof. Tomris OZBEN

THE EFLM EXECUTIVE BOARD INFORMS

The EFLM Strategic and Action Plan 2022-2023

Reported by Tomris Ozben, EFLM President

On behalf of the EFLM Executive Board, I am delighted to present the final version of the EFLM Strategic and Action Plan 2022-2023. The document has been developed in consultation with EFLM National Societies and EFLM Functional Units Chairs and revised according to the received comments, proposals and criticisms.

The current Strategic and Action Plan 2022-2023 consists of 4 main sections with a total of 29 items, as follows:

Structure and Organization	6 Items
Relation with Other Organization	9 Items
Profession, Education and Training, Communication	9 Items
Scientific Affairs	5 Items

As indicated in the status column of the document, some items have been already formed and they are active in 2022.

We strongly believe that achieving better healthcare through Laboratory Medicine is only possible with the active involvement of all our EFLM National Society Members and EFLM Functional Units and for this reason we thank you all very much for your

1. STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION				
No	**Strategic Objectives**	**Actions**	**Functional Units involved**	**status**
1	Create new WG, TG/TFG/TF	Working Group: Artificial Intelligence	WG-AI, C-S	formed, active
		Task Force: Green and Sustainable Laboratories	TF-GSL, EB	formed, active
		Task Group: Chronic Kidney Disease	TG-CKD, C-S	formed, active
		Task Group: EFLMLabX	TG-EFLMLabX, C-P	formed, active
		Direct to Consumer Testing	New	Under preparation
		Integrative Diagnostics	New	Under preparation
		Precision and Personalized Medicine	New	Under preparation
		Preparation of Labs for Emergencies	New	Under preparation
		Task Group with members having expertise in different fields of Lab Med	New	
2	Prepare EFLM's Handbook	Put in one place all the reports/ information about the function and operation of the EFLM over the two-year period of the Executive Board.	EFLM Secretary, WG-PP, EFLM office	
3	Performance evaluation of functional units	Receive reports and hold meetings with Chairs and EFLM Liaisons in International Organisations	EB	
4	Increase EFLM membership (full-affiliate)	Promote EFLM membership	EB and all	
5	Stimulate nomination, ensure equal geographical representation and active engagement of all National Societies in various EFLM functional units	Provide it to be applied in selection of members to the functional units	EB and all	
6	Stimulate more involvement of the young scientists and their possibilities/activities.			

2. RELATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS				
No	**Strategic Objective**	**Action**	**Functional Units involved**	**status**
1	Increase and strengthen communication and collaboration with IVD Industry and MedTech Europe	Contact MedTech Europe, make an MoU for collaboration, attend their annual meetings, invite them to the EFLM meetings and activities	EB, TF-ERA, C-QR	
		Organize joint workshops, symposia, practical courses with experts from IVD Industry	EB, C-ET	
		Adopt Partnership model with IVD Industry for efficient integration and adoption of emerging technologies, and innovations	EB, C-S	
		Increase the number of Industry sponsored educational events and webinars	EB, C-ET	
2	Establish links and collaboration with the European and International Regulatory and Legislative Bodies, and BioMedAlliance	Contact them to include EFLM as a stakeholder and appoint active and efficient Liaison persons.	EB, TF-ERA, C-QR	
3	Establish links and collaborations with the European Commission Cabinets	Contact EC, arrange visits to EC to describe EFLM activities, and projects and invite them to the EFLM laboratories, congresses, exhibitions.	EB, C-P, TF-ERA, C-QR	
4	Establish links and collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO)	Contact WHO and appoint an EFLM liaison to WHO	EB	
5	Establish at least one new collaboration each year with an international clinical laboratory organisation.	Identify a new organization and invite them for collaboration	EB	
6	Maintain and improve collaboration with IFCC	Organize some joint events other than EuroMedLabs,	EB, C-ET	
		Make agreements/contracts with IFCC for the EFLM special projects such as CPECS, and GSL Certificate projects	EB	
7	Maintain and improve collaboration with existing sub-regional Federations in Europe	Organize joint educational workshops, courses, symposia	EB, C-ET	
		Organize EFLM sponsored symposia in their congresses	EB, C-ET	
8	Maintain and improve collaboration with IFCC Regional Federations	Organize joint educational workshops, courses, symposia	EB, C-ET	
		Organize EFLM symposia in the annual congresses of the IFCC regional Federations	EB, C-ET	
9	Maintain and improve collaboration with Arab Federation of Clinical Biology (AFCB),	Prepare a new MoU with AFCB	EB, C-ET	
		Organize joint LM4MS conferences according to the new Guidelines	EB, C-ET	
		establish joint WGs / TGs for practical work	EB, C-ET	

3. PROFESSION; EDUCATION AND TRAINING; COMMUNICATION				
No	**Strategic Objective**	**Action**	**Functional Units involved**	**status**
1	Establish a Network for Diagnostic Laboratories	Establish a forum-platform to share experiences, challenges of diagnostic laboratories in Europe and beyond	EB and all Committees	
2	Promote EFLM continuing professional education credit system CPECS® as a unique accreditation provider for the educational programs and events.	Strengthen the WG-LMCP. Protect know-how and intellectual property of EFLM.	WG-LMCP	
3	Organize practical on-site courses in some specialised laboratories in Europe	Identify specialised laboratories able to host practical courses	EB, C-P, TG-EFLMLabX, WG-AI	
4	Harmonization of EuSpLM education and training across Europe	Promote, and maintain the EFLM European Syllabus Course as a unique educational resource for postgraduate education in EuSpLM	EB, C-ET, C-P, TG-ESC, WG-AI	
5	Achieve the recognition of professional qualifications of Specialists in Laboratory Medicine by the EU Commission to support free professional movement of all competent practitioners across EU borders	Contact EU Commission	EB, C-P	
6	Increase membership to the EFLM Academy and the EuSpLM Register	Promote EFLM Academy and EuSpLM Register	All	
8	Promote the Value of Laboratory Medicine outside the labs	Promote European Lab Day; increase communication outside labs	All, C-C, TG-ELD	
9	Support and develop the EFLM e-learning Platform	Develop webinars on clinically relevant laboratory topics, upload talks of speakers delivered at the EFLM Conferences	C-ET, C-C, WG-DE	

4. SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS				
No	**Strategic Objective**	**Action**	**Functional Units involved**	**status**
1	Demand Management for appropriate test requesting.	Form a new Task Group with members having expertise in different fields of Laboratory Medicine	EB, C-S, WG-PRE, WG-POST, WG-AI	
2	Harmonization of tests having no reference material nor reference measurement procedures	Produce guidance documents to harmonise practice for ad interim result comparability	C-S, C-QR	
3	Develop clinical guidelines with the active involvement of Laboratory Professionals	Contact European Clinical Organisations to develop guidelines (or vice versa)	EB, C-S	
4	Improve laboratory reports, e.g. graphical presentations, Reference Change Values (RCV)	Write guidelines and recommendations including possible integration with other diagnostics	C-S, WG-POST	
5	Harmonisation of Laboratory information	Improve total quality management and procedures	C-S, WG-AI, WG-PRE, WG-POST, C-QR	

Glossary of the abbreviations

C-C	Communication Committee
C-ET	Communication Education & Training
C-P	Committee Profession
C-QR	Committee Quality & Regulations
C-S	Committee Science
EB	Executive Board
TF-ERA	Task Force: European Regulatory Affairs
TF-GSL	Task Force: Green & Sustainable Laboratories
TG-CKD	Task Group: Chronic Kidney Disease
TG-EFLMLabX	Task Group: EFLMLabX
TG-ELD	Task Group: European Laboraory Day
TG-ESC	Task Group: European Syllabus Course
WG-AI	Working Group: Artificial Intelligence
WG-DE	Working Group: Distance Education & e-learning
WG-LMCP	Working Group: Laboratory Medicine Credit Points
WG-POST	Working Group: Postanalytical Phase
WG-PP	Working Group: Promotion & Publications
WG-PRE	Working Group: Preanalytical Phase

Interview with Professor Elizabeta Topić, PhD, Spec. Clinical Chemistry and Lab Medicine

Conducted by Daria Pašalić, Chair of the EFLM Education and Training Committee

In your professional career, you have served in many leading roles both in your country and internationally. What was your motivation?

I am still convinced that I have chosen one of the most challenging professions in the medical sciences i.e. laboratory medicine that in its every day work unifies the professional things, science and education. My motivation, always oriented to the patient, was the thought that the cooperation with experienced domestic and international colleagues could lead to the increase the value of laboratory medicine in profession, in science and in education. As one of the lieder in the profession in our country, serving as Clinical Laboratory director at the University hospital more than 14 years and Professor of Medical Biochemistry at the Faculty of Pharmacy and Medical Biochemistry, and as the president of the Croatian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory medicine for 13 years I wanted to contribute with my knowledge and experience the further development of EFLM. It was a great satisfaction in working with others colleagues and to achieve mutually agreed goals.

What was in it for you?

As I said it was very stimulating to work with colleagues from different countries and discuss everyday problems or matters related to the laboratory sciences. You have been finding out that most problems in your profession are internationally very similar and working together you could achieve more. It was also satisfaction to be member of this great family such as EFLM and of being able to accomplish and promote matters that was important for the profession. Personally, it was a great privilege for me to meet people and to develop friendship all over the world.

If you would need to name a role that was most rewarding to you, what would it be?

It is indeed difficult to say. However, as the founder, organizer and lecturer I would single out the EFLM continuous postgraduate scientific courses with common name EFLM Continuous Postgraduate Course in Clinical Chemistry. This project was launched in 2001 under the auspices of FESCC, EFCC after EFLM in organization of the Croatian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CSMBLM) and Slovenian Association of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (SACCLM). The aim of the Courses was to disseminate the utmost new approaches, guidelines and models in disease diagnostics, monitoring and treatment in frame of the postgraduate training. Over more than 15 years, the C-ET has provided attractive education and training programs that were heterogeneous and diverse enough to meet the individual educational needs in the course of continuing professional development. The common title of EFLM, former FESCC and EFCC, courses was New Classification, Diagnosis and Treatment, each of them dedicated to a particular medical discipline, as follows: 2001 Diabetes mellitus, 2002 Cardiovascular disease, 2003 Neurological disease, 2004 Neoplastic disease, 2005 Autoimmune disease, 2006 Metabolic syndrome, 2007 Molecular diagnostics, 2008 Kidney disease, 2009 Thyroid disease, 2010 Thrombophilia, 2011 Inflammation, 2012 Gastrointestinal disease, 2013 Point-of-care testing, 2014 Diabetes mellitus revisited, and 2015 Quality assessment of laboratory methods. These Courses known as Dubrovnik Courses were affiliated with the programs of the Interuniversity Centre Dubrovnik. Only the last one was held in Zagreb. On such a way EFLM gave an opportunity to about 1000 participants attending these Courses and listening to some 100 invited speakers from all over Europe to meet and friendly discuss and learn about the situation or the possible problems in the profession in particular countries.

To each Course the Handbook containing all lectures was given to the participants. The quality of organization and the quality of the program and lecturers were evaluated using two different questionnaires. At the end the Course participants have been asked to propose some topics for the next course. It was really the great experience to gather and work with the laboratory experts and physicians on the same medical problems in mutual discussion and exchanging experience and ideas. Along, it was always challenging to find and meet the experienced colleagues as lecturers that they presented the most recent knowledge in the fields.

You were Chair of Education and training Committee in the time of EFLM but also in one mandate during the EFCC. During FESCC you have been in team developing the education and training programs. What were the greatest challenges during your EFLM engagement? How would you describe EFLM in those days?

The FESCC as the first professional and scientific organization was formed in 1993 at the 10th European Congress of Clinical Chemistry in Nice leaded by Prof. Victor Blaton. Professor Blaton played an important role also in education. Almost from the beginning and I was in his team dealing with education. At that time as I said the first continuous postgraduate course in Laboratory Medicine at the Interuniversity Centre of Dubrovnik was organized in 2001 as FESCC Course. The European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFCC) was formed in 2007 and absorbed the Committees and Working Groups from FESCC. I was appointed as a chair of the C-ET in 2010. The FESCC Courses changed the name to the EFCC Courses. In 2012 the abbreviation EFLM for the profession was adopted. EFLM absorbed Committee from EFCC and I was then appointed as EFLM C-ET chair and served them till 2015 (all together 3 mandates of 2 years). One more year worked in Task and Finish group (TF) in frame of C-ET. The task of the TF group was the work on the Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Events by EFLM. The members of the Committee, WGs and TF group proposed by National Societies were devoted and very cooperative in the work we were tasked for. I have to admit, that it was a great time for me and I really enjoyed working with so many colleagues around EU countries on the development and implementation of education for EFLM societies. At the end of my 6 years mandate I received from EFLM EB the momentus gift for Distinguished service for EFLM.

At my time the Committee worked and still work due three working groups; Congresses and Postgraduate Education, responsible not only to provide and support postgraduate education but to evaluate bids for EuroMedLab Congresses, to be responsible for EFLM auspices and to develop and maintain the EFLMLabX the exchange programme of EFLM. The founder of EFLMLabX was an excellent colleague from Slovenia prof. Janja

Marc leading this project very successfully. A great expert Prof. Daniel Rajdl was founder and leader of the second WG; Distance education and e-learning, critically evaluating information from courses, lectures and documents including electronic learning tools. He also interacts with national societies to collect their needs and any potential e-learning resources already available. The third WG Laboratory Medicine Credit Points chaired now by great expert in the accreditation field, Prof. Sedef Yanice, has the aim to establish and run the EFLM system to allocate credit points for educational events, thus continuing work on the guidelines proposed by the TF group.

How do you see the future of EFLM?

Among other efforts to ensure uniform quality of laboratory medicine services in all EFLM countries, one of the EFLM missions is to include harmonization in life-long education, thus ensuring continuous professional development of specialists in clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine in all EFLM countries. Of course, the future of EFLM, as any other organization, is dependent on the EFLM members. They must choose the right leaders for the EFLM Executive Boards, Committees, and Working Groups and find out what are the most urgent needs in profession and try to influence these together. In the future of EFLM should continuous keep on the close contact with the national societies on the one side and IFCC on the other side but also with the other regional societies in the field of the laboratory medicine.

The EFLM Committee for Education and training composed of members voted by EFLM National societies, who come from different cultures, have different priorities, views and preferences. That is not the team you select, but you have to work with that team and manage all kinds of important projects, towards common European goals. Is it difficult to lead such a heterogeneous team? Could you describe your experience during your engagement?

From my experience through several years serving as ET Committee chair, I have good experience in common work with Committee members delegated by National Societies. I really have pleasant experience in collaboration within the Committee in solving many Committee tasks and I am grateful them for that. I am sure that it was important to listen carefully each member and consider about their each suggestion and proposal in relation to achievement the goal but simultaneously more important is not promote yourself, but give credit to the people who do the work with you. Of course sometime it took time but our work run in good atmosphere with much enthusiasm very effective.

At that time Committee established three Working Groups (WGs) that are now active in EFLM. The challenge was always to find the right person to lead these WGs. If you don't have the right person as chair, it will be difficult for the group to perform anything. The main challenge as C-ET chair along with education was to develop and incorporate the crediting system in EFLM National Societies. It was possible through important contribution of Task and Finish Group developing the guidelines for accrediting system.

Your field of expertise among other was pharmacogenetics. Could you name some major achievements, milestones and future challenges in that area?

Almost 40 years ago, I became very intrigued by the field of pharmacogenetics so I started intensively to study in it. As you know pharmacogenetics is a newer branch of pharmacological sciences studying the relationship between genetic predisposition of an individual and his ability to metabolize a drug. It helps understand why some individuals respond to drugs and others do not, why some require higher or lower doses to achieve an optimal therapeutic response, and tries to help the physician identify those patients who will respond favourably to therapy or develop side effects. Approximately 7% of patients are affected by adverse drug reactions, increasing the overall hospital costs by 1.9% and drug costs by 15%. Some 0.3% of adverse drug reactions have fatal outcomes.

Having all these in mind my skilful colleagues and me, in 1989 have developed the first pharmacogenetics laboratory at Clinical Hospital Centre Zagreb, Croatia with goal to investigate the known gene polymorphisms of enzymes involved in drug metabolism, receptors and drug transporters. It was important before the therapy starts to determine the genetic changes that are responsible for success or failure of certain drug and thus help clinicians to choose the appropriate drug and drug dose. The project was recognized by Croatian Ministry of Science and Education and was financially supported. From that time several clinical laboratories stared with pharmacogenetics testing. Today more than 55 different drugs in everyday use in our country can be tested. Our group members have been invited to present the results of the pharmacogenetics testing or give the lectures in pharmacogenetics all around the world. Till now we published the book on Pharmacogenetics in Clinical Practice, chapters in three books and published a lot of articles in scientific journals. One of the EFLM continuous postgraduate courses in Dubrovnik was devoted to Pharmacogenetics, but information on pharmacogenetics was also part of the particular disease treatment in several EFLM Course handbooks.

There is no doubt that the future of medicine will be based on early diagnosis and individually designed therapy, so the EU Commission 2016 has included the concept of personalized medicine among its key health priorities and established the International Consortium of Personalized Medicine (ICPerMed) with the task of synchronizing the work of all EU members on the standardization of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures related to personalized medicine, in which Croatia participates. Pharmacogenetics in personalized medicine plays a key role however, applying of pharmacogenetics depends on the ability of clinical laboratories to provide accurate, precise and useful information to the clinician at the right time, enabling the right drug at the right dose for each individual patient. Therefore, the pharmacogenetics presents the new challenge for the laboratory experts as well as for physicians in the mutual work in the field of laboratory and personalized medicine.

The effect of climate changes is more and more obvious. How do they relate to our profession? Is there something we should be concerned about? How can we as a profession contribute in that respect?

It is not doubt that the profession Laboratory Medicine should contribute to a sustainable healthcare system ensuring that

resources are used efficiently from ecological, social, and economical perspectives, while providing high quality services to patients and physicians. The initiative of prof. Tomris Ozben, recent EFLM President to establish the EFLM Task-Force Green Labs, is really excellent. She proudly announced that they reached its first goal by developing the "EFLM Guidelines for Green and Sustainable Medical Laboratories". So the Laboratory Medicine will follow the European Green Deal aims at making Europe the world's first climate neutral continent by 2050.

How did you approach retirement? How do you like to spend your time?
My consideration about retirement is similar to that Professor Ian Watson; you should look at retirement as a new chapter in your life, not the end. My favourite hobbies from my childhood to date were the painting and music, so I really have time to enjoy in them now. I am currently the student in painting school for adult, seldom play piano but enjoy very often in wonderful concerts of domestic or international Philharmonic and Symphonic orchestras, Opera or Drama etc. But along with this, my greatest happiness and enjoy are my four extraordinary dear and nice grandchildren making the time spent with them very precious.

For the end, as an expert and a senior colleague, what would be your advice to young individuals who wish to pursue their career in laboratory medicine? Is our education fit for the purpose? Is there something missing in our curriculum?
The most important it seems to me is to enjoy in profession laboratory medicine! It offers so many opportunities in profession and at the same time it is a wonderful platform for research and science, clinical and laboratory practice, long life education, and finally works with many colleagues all over the world. The next most important thing for laboratory professionals is, not to be closed in the laboratory, but go to the clinical wards and be in team with physicians in diagnosing and treatment of the patients. It would be also very wise and important to establish the laboratory structures so the other colleagues/expert can carry on the work after you.
We are aware that the need for patients self-monitoring is growing rapidly and so is the need of professional laboratory support and further development of the profession. As Professor Watson stress, taking the initiative in these areas will ensure the continuing relevance of laboratory medicine in a rapidly changing clinical world!

COFFEE WITH THE EFLM PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,
Dear Readers,

In this edition of the EFLM eNewsletter, in the section "Coffee with the President", I present to you with great pleasure interviews with distinguished Presidents/National Representatives of the EFLM member Societies: Drahomíra Springer, João Faro Viana, Tommaso Trenti and Harald Renz.

I would like to thank my guests for being available to share their experiences, thoughts and opinions about EFLM, our profession and give the opportunity to the large EFLM audience to get to know them and their society better. We are all very grateful for their substantial contributions to the EFLM and its mission that make EFLM what it is today.

I hope you will enjoy reading these interviews with our esteemed colleagues.
Tomris Ozben
EFLM President

Coffee with Drahomíra Springer, President of the Czech Society of Clinical Biochemistry

Could you briefly introduce your society? When was it founded, who can become a member, activities of your society, what has been done so far and future activities, projects, plans?

The Czech Society of Clinical Biochemistry (CSKB) is a part of The Czech Medical Association of Jan Evangelista Purkyně (CLS JEP) and has 1022 members (09/01/2023), including 986 University graduates and 211 laboratory assistants. Among the graduates, there are 204 medical doctors and 782 graduates from other Universities. The Society has 37 foreign members including 6 from Slovakia.
The initial meeting of the clinical chemistry section of the Czech Medical Society of J.E. Purkyně was held on October 10th, 1958. The electoral meeting was held on March 20th, 1959. Prof. Jaroslav Hořejší was elected the first president. The Czech Society of Clinical Chemistry was established on April 24th, 1959.
The Board of the Society is elected for four years and consists of 7 members and the supervising committee has 3 members.
An important part of the activity of The Society is to issue guidelines or recommendations on different topics, eg. thyreopathies, estimation of glomerular filtration rate, proteinuria, cardiac markers, diabetes mellitus, glucometers, POCT, screening of Down syndrome, basic recommendations for general practitioners, EQA, IQA, cerebrospinal fluid, tumor markers. Manuals on the Preanalytical phase, Internal Quality Control, Vitamins, Amino acids, and Metrology were published by The Society.
The Society signed a contract with EDMA in 2008 on the Czech version of Lab Tests Online, the internet project which was established by AACC with the aim to help patients and non-laboratory health care professionals to better understand clinical laboratory tests. The Czech version is complete with 240 lab tests, screening programs, preanalytical information, and 96 diseases.
The Czech Society of Clinical Chemistry is a member of IFCC and EFCC and participates in the activities of many of their workgroups. Some of the society members are also members of foreign societies of clinical chemistry. Society has been entering into international contacts. Distinguished speakers from many countries took part in The Society Congresses, meetings, or workshops.
The Society is organized the national Congress every second year also r and many additional regional or topic-oriented meetings. The last XVth Congress took place in Zlin in October 2021, the next one will be held in Hradec Kralove in September 2023. The section of laboratory assistants, part of the CSKB, organizes its own BIOLAB congress every other year. We hosted some very important professional events. Euromedlab 2001 in Prague was visited by more than 2800 scientists. The Czech Society of Clinical Chemistry applied again for the possibility of organizing Euromedlab in Prague in 2025, but unfortunately, we were not successful. The Society publishes quarterly the Journal „Clinical Biochemistry and Metabolism – Klinická biochemie a metabolismus " (printed since 1993). The Journal is focused on the problems of clinical biochemistry, pathophysiology, pathobiochemistry, nutritional support, and clinical genetics and will be published only in electronic form this year. It contains reviews, original papers, case reports, and methodical studies.
Last twenty years we are developing and improving the accreditation system for medical labs.
The labs are accredited according to ISO 15189 (using the national accreditation body (Czech Institute of Accreditation). The Czech Medical Association also established The National Accreditation Body for clinical laboratories which issue Audits for labs.which issue Audits for labs.

What are your suggestions for better education? Is the current education in your country fit for the purpose? Do you have

a core curriculum for the training of medical biochemistry professionals?

The aim of the specialized education of doctors is to achieve full qualification in the field of clinical biochemistry based on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge of biochemical and physiological events in health and disease and practical skills for the efficient organization of the operation of the clinical biochemistry department. The condition for inclusion in specialized education in the field of clinical biochemistry is the acquisition of professional competence to practice the profession of a doctor by completing at least a six-year full-time study, which includes theoretical and practical teaching in an accredited master's degree program in general medicine at the Faculty of Medicine. Specialization education is carried out during the practice of the medical profession in the form of a full-day preparation. This education includes obtaining a specialized qualification in the field of clinical biochemistry, passing a basic internal or pediatric training (24 months), specialized training (36 months) after a basic internal training or specialized training (42 months) after basic pediatrics and successful completion of the certification exam. The total duration of specialized education is at least 5 years.
A condition for the inclusion of non-medical workers in specialized training in the field of clinical biochemistry is the acquisition of professional competence to perform a profession in laboratory methods. Specialization education has two levels. The first is the basic course (minimum 24 months), which is also common to other laboratory disciplines such as allergology, immunology or genetics, and then there is the second, specialized level, which is dedicated to clinical biochemistry (minimum 30 months). Mandatory practice in the laboratory of the field is also an obvious part of the preparation.

In what direction do you see the laboratory medicine heading? What do you think for the position of the laboratory specialist to increase their visibility within the healthcare system? What challenges do you and your colleagues face?

Although I didn't think it was possible, laboratory medicine is moving towards total business solutions thanks to the EU IVD-R directive. I see this trend as very dangerous, and we should all think about whether this is the way we want to go. On the other hand, I think that diversity between systems or home-made solutions allows laboratory medicine to grow.
One way for laboratory specialists to increase their visibility within the healthcare system is by participating in interdisciplinary teams and collaborating with other healthcare professionals to integrate laboratory testing into the broader healthcare process. This can help to demonstrate the value of laboratory medicine and the important role that laboratory professionals play in patient care.

Do you think medical biochemistry professionals are ready for the emerging technologies such as Digitalization, Laboratory Diagnostic Algorithms, AI, ML, Integrative Diagnostics, Big Data? Do you believe in Partnership model for efficient integration and adoption of emerging technologies and innovations?

There are also several challenges that laboratory professionals and our colleagues face in adopting these emerging technologies. One major challenge is the need for ongoing training and professional development to ensure that we can effectively utilize these technologies in our work. Additionally, there may be financial constraints and challenges in implementing new technologies and systems, as well as the need to ensure that any new technologies are fully validated and meet regulatory standards.
Overall, I believe that medical biochemistry professionals are ready for the emerging technologies in laboratory medicine, but it will require a concerted effort and a focus on continuous learning and professional development to ensure that we are able to effectively integrate these technologies into our work. I also believe in the partnership model for efficient integration and adoption of emerging technologies and innovations, as it allows for collaboration and the sharing of resources and expertise between different stakeholders.
In recent years, developments in many areas have made the use of these technologies directly available. However, here we are faced with the speed of these developments and our ability to adapt and absorb new knowledge. Moreover, I potentially see a risk in the possibilities of use and availability of new technologies in smaller routine laboratories. On the other hand, we already see the undeniable benefits of either new omics technologies in improved clinical efficiency or AI in e.g., workflow optimization automation.

Do you think your society members participate and/or contribute enough to EFLM activities? Do they know the advantages to be EFLM Academy membership, for example, the unique educational resource "Syllabus course", free attendance to the recently held 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference, its sessions were recorded and are available for one year?

The Czech Society of Clinical Biochemistry is represented in IFCC and EFLM committees and working groups by five full members, Dr. Rajdl is the chair of EFLM Communication Committee, prof. Zima was a member of the EFLM board for many years; we try to participate in the activities of other commissions and working groups at least as corresponding members. EFLM does a lot in the field of member education in laboratory medicine, by organizing webinars, congresses, strategic conferences, creating recommendations and, last but not least, by establishing the so-called EFLM Academy. We consider its creation to be one of EFLM's best steps: for a minimum of funds, it gives members of the Czech Society of Clinical Biochemistry access to articles from six prestigious journals in the field of laboratory medicine, CLSI documents, online courses, webinars, sessions of 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference, and, of course, to the Syllabus Course. The complexity of this course and the professionalism of the individual presentations is fascinating; the biggest thanks go especially to prof. Simundic, who not only initiated the creation of the Syllabus course, but also brought it to a successful conclusion in a relatively short time. Starting this year, members of the Czech Society of Clinical Biochemistry have the opportunity to register for the "EFLM Academy" section and thus become collective members of this educational platform.

What do you think about the ongoing and recent EFLM activities/initiatives? Do you have suggestions to increase communication and cooperation with EFLM? What you like and dislike about EFLM

We believe that EFLM will remain active in future in the field of education, but also in the promotion of the profession "European Specialist in Laboratory Medicine" not only within the European Union, but throughout Europe. We consider it a step in the right direction that not only members of professional societies of EU countries, but also of other European countries can obtain this qualification, of course, if their education is in accordance with the European Syllabus. This was not always the case, we remember well that until the Czech Republic was a member of the EU, its experts in laboratory medicine could not obtain this qualification, even though the educational system for medical doctors and scientists was at a better level in the Czech Republic than in many EU member countries. What else we would suggest to improve? We think that the criteria for selecting the host country or city for the EuroMedLab congresses should change. Prague applied several times and was disqualified not for professional reasons, but because it did not meet the requirements for the exhibition area. In the past, very successful European Congresses took place in cities that did not meet this requirement either; we

understand that companies sponsor the event significantly, but we cannot accept criteria that exclude many countries in advance. Furthermore, we would imagine a more active approach by EFLM to the issue of the In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation (IVDR) – the constantly shifting validity date and the uncertainty surrounding this regulation do not bring peace to laboratory work. However, these were just a few ideas on how to further improve EFLM's active approach to the issue of laboratory medicine; they in no way diminish the importance of EFLM for the development of laboratory medicine in Europe.

Some Personal questions…
Please introduce yourself with a few sentences.

My name is Drahomira Springer and I work in biochemical laboratory for more than 35 years. I am also assistant professor at the 1st Medical Faculty of Charles university in Prague.

In your professional career, you have served in many leading roles both in your country and internationally. What was your motivation?

Currently I am the head of the Board of CSKB and I am first nonmedical doctor in that position. I am also the head of the Department of Clinical Biochemistry of the Institute for Postgraduate Medical Education.

Could you share your way in biochemistry? Why did you choose this field? What do you like about your current job? Do you think that you chose the right job for you? If you have another chance?

I studied food production and bioengineering at university, where I was most interested in metabolic pathways and biochemistry in general. After finishing my studies, I started working in a biochemical laboratory in one of the largest hospital in the Czech Republic, (General University Hospital in Prague) where I still work today.. For many years I specialize in investigation of risk of chromosomal aberration and thyroid disorder in pregnancy. This work needs collaboration with other clinical experts, and I like this kind of work.
I am lecturer at the 1st Medical Faculty of Charles University in Prague for more than 20 years and sharing my knowledge with others is fulfilling for me. All in all, I am happy with what I am doing. Working in medical field feels like the best way to help people and I cannot imagine working anywhere else.

What would be your advice to young scientists who wish to pursue their career in laboratory medicine?

There are big developments in laboratory medicine that are enabling even more new iscoveries to be made by young scientists. But it takes a lot of time, so they must be prepared to sacrifice free time to be successful.

Do you have some hobbies? What are the things outside of your work that you are passionate about? How do you like to spend you free time?
I personally like to visit the theater, especially the opera, and I also like to get to know foreign cities and galleries, especially in Europe. I like art of the first half of 20th century including architecture. I spend my free time with my family and friends.

Coffee with João Faro Viana, President of the Portuguese Society of Clinical Chemistry, Genetics and Laboratory Medicine

Could you briefly introduce your society? When was it founded, who can become a member, activities of your society, what has been done so far and future activities, projects, plans?

The Portuguese Society of Laboratory Medicine (SPML), first named as the Portuguese Society of Clinical Chemistry, was founded in 2003. Its purposes were to promote "knowledge and training in clinical chemistry and clinical laboratory in general" and the professional interests of clinical analysts (Pharmacists) and clinical pathologists (Medical Doctors), who were the specialists allowed by the Portuguese law to be technical directors of Medical Laboratories in 2003. SPML also aimed to be the Portuguese representative in the international medical laboratory associations, then the IFCC, FESC and EC4.

Until today, our main activities have been the organization of scientific meetings.

What are your suggestions for better education? Is the current education in your country fit for the purpose? Do you have a core curriculum for the training of medical biochemistry professionals?

In Portugal the core curriculum is established by each different profession involved it is approved by national law and revised periodically.

As an example, for Clinical Pathologists (Medical Doctors), our curriculum has been recently changed, incorporating some obligatory clinical practice, where we can apply our Laboratory knowledge close to our clinical colleagues. I think that this has been a great learning source for both sides and has shortened the "gap" between us.

In what direction do you see the laboratory medicine heading? What do you think for the position of the laboratory specialist to increase their visibility within the healthcare system? What challenges do you and your colleagues face?

In the foreseeable future, I think that the Medical Laboratory will go on being a very important part of medical decision making, despite the fluctuations in the public recognition of our role. For me, our main challenges will be the rapid evolution of scientific knowledge and technology.

Do you think medical biochemistry professionals are ready for the emerging technologies such as Digitalization, Laboratory Diagnostic Algorithms, AI, ML, Integrative Diagnostics, Big Data? Do you believe in Partnership model for efficient integration and adoption of emerging technologies and innovations?

Although I do not have exact data for Portugal, I have the impression that those are mostly unknown fields.

Do you think your society members participate and/or contribute enough to EFLM activities? Do they know the advantages to be EFLM Academy membership, for example, the unique educational resource "Syllabus course", free attendance to the recently held 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference, its sessions were recorded and are available for one year?

I think that our members are not participating enough for the moment. This is something that we will work within our society and try to improve.

I also think that the EFLM educational initiatives have been a strongly contributing to the growing number of our national society members.

What do you think about the ongoing and recent EFLM activities/initiatives? Do you have suggestions to increase communication and cooperation with EFLM? What you like and dislike about EFLM

I think that the EFLM is doing a great work, both in the scientific field and the professional core curriculum and education.

Some Personal questions…

Please introduce yourself with a few sentences.

I was born in Angola and, after my medical degree, I specialized in Laboratory Medicine ("Clinical Pathology" in Portugal).

In my career I was the head of the Immunology Laboratory, the Director of the Hospital Quality Department and the Clinical Director of the Hospital de Santa Cruz (Administration board). From 2015 until my recent retirement, I was the head of the Clinical Pathology Department in one of the public Lisbon hospital centers (Centro Hospitalar de Lisboa Ocidental).

I was also a monitor of Biology and Biochemistry of the Luanda University (Angola), junior researcher in the Biophysics Unit of the Instituto Gulbenkian de Ciência, "Médecin Résident Étranger at the Hospices Civils de Lyon – Unité d'Immunocytologie du Laboratoire d'Hématologie et Cytogénétique, Hôpital Édouard Hérriot and assistant at the Laboratory Medicine unit of the Nova Medical School, Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

My main scientific interests are Proteins, Autoimmunity, Laboratory Quality (Statistical Process Control and Quality Assurance) and test performance evaluation.

In your professional career, you have served in many leading roles both in your country and internationally. What was your motivation?
I think that my main motivation was my curiosity, which led to my interest in trying to find better ways to do things.

Could you share your way in biochemistry? Why did you choose this field? What do you like about your current job? Do you think that you chose the right job for you? If you have another chance?
My interest in biochemistry started during the first years of my medical education. As a medical student I was invited to teach it and later, as I was not feeling happy in being a medical practician, I chose Medical Laboratory as a specialization and still think that it was the right decision for me.

What would be your advice to young scientists who wish to pursue their career in laboratory medicine?
Go for it!

Do you have some hobbies? What are the things outside of your work that you are passionate about? How do you like to spend you free time?
Outside my family (I have 3 children and 3 grandchildren) my main hobby is music. I play the trumpet and am one of the founders of the oldest still performing traditional jazz band in Portugal called the "Dixie Gang". If you like this kind of music, take a look at us wishing a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year during Covid times https://youtu.be/IhVn8qZBeGQ or look for "Dixie Gang" on YouTube.
I also like Windsurfing (Portugal has great spots) and fencing (I was the national saber champion back in 1978).


Laboratory staff


The Dixie Gang


Windsurfing


Fencing

Could you briefly introduce your society? When was it founded, who can become a member, activities of your society, what has been done so far and future activities, projects, plans?

First of all, for our Society, Italian Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Clinical Molecular Biology- Laboratory Medicine "SIBioC-Medicina di Laboratorio", 2023 will be an extraordinary year! We have a unique opportunity to host both the 25th International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine - World Lab and the 25th European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine - EuroMedLab in the occasion of SIBioC's 55th Annual congress. This extraordinary event will be held in the most stylish and futuristic Convention Center "The Cloud" in our capital city, Rome. We are looking forward to celebrate time together again, following prolonged professional and social isolation due to the pandemic!

SIBioC-Medicina di Laboratorio was founded in 1969 and has around 3200 active members. Since its foundation, the Society has been characterized both by its multi-disciplinary host of members, including doctors, biologists, chemists, pharmacists and biomedical laboratory technicians. This is mostly due to the society's constant search to establish collaborative relationships with Italian medical societies and international scientific laboratory societies, most importantly the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (I.F.C.C.) and the European Federation of Laboratory Medicine, EFLM. Our purpose to bring together those who, for professional or research purposes, work in the fields of Clinical Biochemistry, Clinical Molecular Biology and general Laboratory Medicine, promoting initiatives to improve professional skills, scientific updating, implementation of global quality and best diagnostic practice recommendations.

SIBioC-Medicina di Laboratorio is governed by a directly elected National Board, who in turn is supported by committees who represent the main areas of the society's activities. Additionally, members are actively involved in scientific working groups led by a SIBioC-Medicina di Laboratorio Scientific Committee. The SIBioC headquarters are located in Milan.

The organization of our society is further based on regional delegations, with a delegation for each Italian region. The aim of the delegations is to promote local scientific initiatives, including educational activities such as courses, conferences and symposia. Following the Covid19 pandemic, we have experienced a significant increase in the emerging and crucial role of web seminars and online continuous education programs, disseminating professional education training on new analytical technological skills and new diagnostic strategies in Laboratory Medicine.

The success of this year's National Congress held in Genoa with over 1200 participants, the presentation of 300 abstracts, 12 scientific sessions with 115 full presentations and 10 workshops was of great satisfaction for SIBioC, especially after Covid19 isolation.

An outstanding activity promoted by our society is the, Biochimica Clinica (BC), which is SIBioC's official scientific journal. BC publishes 4 quarterly issues, with an additional issue dedicated to the Proceedings of the National Congress (electronic version only). The other issues are planned to be dedicated to topics of particular interest, selected by the Editorial Committee. BC publishes both in Italian and English (official SIBioC documents are published in English) and is indexed in Scopus, EMBASE, Engineering Village, Reaxys, ESCI, Cabells Journalytics and EBSCO. Journal content is available to the SIBioC members with a number of articles published as open access. BC plays a strategic role in the diffusion among the Italian scientific community of original research, reviews, guideline and recommendations, often published jointly with other clinical scientific societies.

An important SIBioC project has been the management of the Italian version of labtestonline (www.labtestonline.it). This tool is an essential communication tool with the public, offering correct information, guaranteed by laboratory professionals. Following the AACC's release of accountability as the reference edition, from this year, the Italian website will be managed by SIBioC. The success of this initiative, proven by over half a million monthly site visits, confirms the both the opportunity and need for Laboratory Professionals to play a proactive and informative communication. We are developing strategic actions to promote the role of clinical laboratory among healthcare professionals and journalists, as well as being active on social media, sharing the value and role of Laboratory Medicine.

What are your suggestions for better education? Is the current education in your country fit for the purpose? Do you have a core curriculum for the training of medical biochemistry professionals?

In Italy there are University post graduate courses in Laboratory Medicine. All National Health Care Laboratory Professionals have completed this 4 year course. In Italy, almost all clinical laboratory are managed by the National health care system.

In general, the University courses, along with practical experience acquired through obligatory attendance, usually offer an adequate educational quality of Laboratory Medicine.

Updated training, especially in the most innovative areas of diagnostics and more generally on emerging technologies (both in terms of analytical processes and knowledge of new technologies) seems to be the most pressing area of education.

SIBioC believes in the importance in teaching and maintaining a close link between the overall care pathway and professional laboratory activity, in terms of clinical patient management. Laboratory test outcomes induce clinical interventions for the best patient outcomes. Therefore, the clinical motivation for the test request and the value of the information produced by laboratory testing should be shared, where the optimal use of the laboratory information is communicated to the clinician, highlighting the role of our profession. That the laboratory is one of the few places where medicine, otherwise divided into many specialized areas, is centralized is undoubtedly a fascinating aspect of Laboratory Medicine. Further, the leading role of Laboratory Medicine in current Medicine can be a factor of attraction for young doctors, biologists and chemists. Currently in Italy there are few doctors who have the vocation and passion for the laboratory profession.

What is the greatest strength/weakness of your society? What challenges do you and your colleagues face?

The greatest strength of SIBioC is its wide member base, including medical professionals of varying backgrounds, with a strong will to promote the value of Laboratory Medicine and share their valuable experience. However, SIBioC should be characterized not only by the competence of its outstanding members but also by the inclusiveness of all members, giving

added value to the community and participation of all laboratory professionals. Upcoming challenges and opportunities expected in Laboratory Medicine include the establishment of ongoing professional education programs explaining new analytical technologies and diagnostic strategies, innovation in digitalization, extensive data processing and the consequent integration and interpretation of clinical laboratory information. These educational programs have been requested by SIBioC members as these new and evolving areas are greatly needed among professionals to meet clinical diagnostic innovation management. SIBioC offers the platform where these new skill sets, currently being developed among members of high professional profile, can be shared.

In what direction do you see the laboratory medicine heading? What do you think for the position of the laboratory specialist to increase their visibility within the healthcare system?

Innovations, such as omics, molecular biology, personalized medicine, big data analytics are expected in the immediate future, if not already arrived. Many expert clinicians have predicted that medicine in the our century will be based on an ever increasing amount of information provided by laboratory medicine, in terms of new biomarkers, molecular investigations, omics, personalized medicine and more. This will require clinician interaction with specialists able to translate the huge amount of diagnostic information produced by the laboratory into valuable clinical information. This does not automatically mean an important role for laboratory professionals, as other new figures, such as data scientists or data managers, able to apply predictive algorithms and diagnostic techniques based on machine learning, will play an important role. However, I am personally very optimistic that the role of laboratory professionals will be increasingly central, not only in the choice and implementation of new innovative activities and technologies, but also in the overall governance of diagnostic and therapeutic care pathways, being capable in synthetizing and transferring to clinicians the increasingly huge tide of sophisticated diagnostic data available.

Do you think medical biochemistry professionals are ready for the emerging technologies such as Digitalization, Laboratory Diagnostic Algorithms, AI, ML, Integrative Diagnostics, Big Data? Do you believe in Partnership model for efficient integration and adoption of emerging technologies and innovations?

I believe that these new highly innovative topics are ongoing professional challenges. These are complex issues of extraordinary scientific and cultural impact, not only for laboratory medicine but also for medicine in general. Despite the current lack of sufficient training and experience in these evolving areas, laboratory medicine has always been at the forefront of technological innovation, digitization, organizational change and management of new diagnostic practices. National and International scientific societies therefore play an essential role in providing ongoing professional training in these emerging technologies, sharing new skill sets and identifying the best choices and experiences, whilst offering a highly qualified point of reference. I am optimistic that both our professionals and societies are capable in promoting a governance of change. New professional paradigms are certainly a challenge but also a great professional opportunity for Laboratory Medicine

Do you think your society members participate and/ or contribute enough to EFLM activities? Do they know the advantages to be EFLM Academy membership, for example, the unique educational resource "Syllabus course", free attendance to the recently held 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference, its sessions were recorded and are available for one year?

Many of our SIBioC members have held or are currently holding important roles in EFLM and IFCC. The challenge is to be able to provide an adequate response to the evolution of medicine, and specifically Laboratory Medicine, as required by our colleagues. I believe that National and International Scientific Societies, such as EFLM and IFCC, will offer an extraordinary contribution to educate and professional best practices, by aligning professionals skills on a national and international basis. I don't think there are other institutions that have such a truly recognized role among our professional community, and projects such as EFLM Academy and Syllabus course, will play a pivotal role. Once again, I believe the inclusion of all our societal members is the most effective way of promoting international initiatives and knowledge regarding all the tools made available today. Acting as a bridge between the national and international reality is a strategic function that SIBioC has always performed. The recently EFLM Strategic Conference was a great success and it was very important in shaping the future of the profession. however I am not sure if it was followed by our members and surely we need to do more as a Society to disseminate and involve our members, the fact that the sessions were recorded and are available for one year can certainly help to promote the internalization of our members.

What do you think about the ongoing and recent EFLM activities/ initiatives? Do you have suggestion to increase communication and cooperation with EFLM? What you like and dislike about EFLM?

Undoubtedly in recent years EFLM has increasingly become a point of extraordinary reference for National Societies and for all laboratory medicine professionals, acquiring recognition and appreciation. EFLM's effort to be ever more inclusive and attractive to all colleagues is perceived as very positive. I think the scientific aspect is excellent as the effort to develop a strategic vision for the future of laboratory medicine. It is certainly of great value to further improve the communicative aspect promoting inclusion for all colleagues and the National Societies now acting, the perception of being part of an open and friendly professional community is undoubtedly a major value where the many tools put in place as working groups, project guidelines, educational activities are fundamentals. The interaction between the National Societies members in a vision of international collaboration with the IFCC are further aspects of absolute and increasingly importance now and in the next future not only developing scientific view but supporting colleagues.

Some Personal questions…
Please introduce yourself with a few sentences.

I live in the countryside between Modena and Bologna with my wife Carla, my daughter Elena, her husband Leonardo and my grandson Giorgio.
Graduate as medical doctor at Modena University then I obtained postgraduate specializations in Gastroenterology and Endoscopy, Medical Toxicology and Chemistry and Clinical Biochemistry. In the 90s I worked in the Internal Medicine Department and in a clinical service of Toxicology and Pharmacology where I was involved in research relating to the mechanisms of both experimental and clinical toxicity and clinical pharmacology. In the early 2000s I participated in the design and implementation project of the new clinical laboratory at the new Modena hospital of which I became director in 2004. Then up to now I was nominated Director of the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, the department is made up of the main clinical laboratories of the University of Modena and the public health system. I actively participated in the activities of SIBioC (Italian Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Clinical Molecular Biology- Laboratory Medicine) where I held various positions on the national board and from 2022 I am President of the Society.

In your professional career, you have served in many leading roles both in your country and internationally. What was your motivation?

It has always been my great concern and curiosity to interact with colleagues both at local and national level about the most relevant topics from a scientific and cultural point of view and discussing experiences in professional practice, in managerial and organizational choices. The human relationship developed in professional meetings, the opportunities for exchanging knowledge as well the opportunities for discussion in the diagnostic paths has always been for me an occasion of enjoyment that completes my professional vision.
I am delighted to build an identity of the profession role together with my colleagues to give value to what we do for patients and healthcare. Finally, it is very gratifying to satisfy the curiosity of knowing how colleagues work and how organize themselves and what they think about the most important issues of the profession and to discuss them together.

Could you share your way in biochemistry? Why did you choose this field? What do you like about your current job? Do you think that you chose the right job for you? If you have another chance?

During my degree in medicine I have always been passionate about knowing the molecular and biochemical causes of diseases and their pathogenesis so I did research for a few years to then start the activity in internal medicine taking directly care of patients. One of the most interesting features of Laboratory Medicine is how it is now one of the few areas where all of medicine is recomposed, overcoming now specialist areas and it is very qualifying for me to be able to give a contribution to the patient care in the daily relationship with clinical colleagues both on patients and as decision in the choice and definition of the best diagnostic practices.
Starting from a clinical and research activity, I therefore oriented myself to clinical laboratory diagnostics which gave me a lot of satisfaction and which allowed me to realize myself on a professional level. To be honest, I think I would make the same choices again, however I regret to have missed the direct relation with patients since I dedicated myself exclusively to the laboratory, the relationship with patients as a doctor is important even if I continue to carry out a clinical activity, albeit marginal.

What would be your advice to young scientists who wish to pursue their career in laboratory medicine?

Quite simply to believe in what they wanted to do, to follow the motivations they deem most important, to be guided by passion. I believe that these considerations can be the basis not only and not so much of professional success but in finding satisfaction in daily professional life. Laboratory Medicine is an area in great evolution and undoubtedly it is already now and in the future even more it will be the basis of medicine in all its areas and expressions using increasingly cutting-edge technologies and giving continuous stimuli to the evolution of professional skills.
I believe that as scientific societies it is a strong obligation to create the conditions to be able to offer young scientists the best opportunities and the best information to develop the interest, skills and commitment that undoubtedly characterize them.

Do you have some hobbies? What are the things outside of your work that you are passionate about? How do you like spend your free time?

I live in the countryside which I like very much between Modena and Bologna I love taking care of the small farm that my father left me even though I am not a garden lover but rather I like truest countryside and the people living there.
I don't have particular or worthy to be mentioned hobbies, I like traveling and seeing interesting places, monuments, landscapes and people like many of us, I like music in all its forms, especially opera and classica. When I travel I try to find the opportunity to be present at concerts or artistic events, also to experience the visited city in a less superficial and touristic way. My city and my region, Modena and Emilia are considered one of the capitals of Italian food and I too like good food and above all good wine also because it is generally accompanied by pleasant and serene moments with family and friends.

SIBioC-Medicina di Laboratorio Board and Colleagues at our National Meeting 2022

My last Meeting in Beirut January 2023 together Colleagues

Sergio Bernardini, Khosrow Adeli, Paivi Laitinen and myself in Meeting in Rome to organize World Lab 2023

My laboratory People in Modena

Laura Sciacovelli, SIBioC President, Sergio Bernardini SIBioC past President and myself SIBioC elected President in Rome 2021

Together the EFLM President Tomris Ozben in my Laboratory in Modena

Meeting at the Italian Parliament on Laboratory Medicine 2022

Opening National SIBioC- Medicina di Laboratorio Genua 2022

Coffee with Harald Renz, President of the German Society of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine

Could you briefly introduce your society? When was it founded, who can become a member, activities of your society, what has been done so far and future activities, projects, plans?

The German Society for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (DGKL) was founded exactly 20 years ago. This was the result of a merger of two German societies, one more focusing on the medical doctors and the other one more on the clinical chemists in our field. The society now has more than 1.000 active members from all different areas of laboratory medicine. Everybody can become a member, who is engaged or actively working in the field of laboratory medicine (physician and scientists as well). We also have corporate members and honorary members. The scientific section of the society is divided into competence areas under which we have a huge number of active working groups. This spans from education and training to technical and scientific aspects and laboratory management and so forth. The society has a foundation which runs the institute for external proficiency testing in Germany, one of two officially accredited organizations in the country (RfB, Referenzinstitut für Bioanalytik).

What are your suggestions for better education? Is the current education in your country fit for the purpose? Do you have a core curriculum for the training of medical biochemistry professionals?

Laboratory Medicine is in Germany a medical discipline, a specialization. As with any other specializations the curriculum is fixed by the German medical association. Currently a five year programme is mandatory including one clinical year. In parallel, we also offer the education and training as clinical chemist. This programme is offered by our society.

In what direction do you see the laboratory medicine heading? What do you think for the position of the laboratory specialist to increase their visibility within the healthcare system? What challenges do you and your colleagues face?

Our discipline of laboratory medicine has a bright future, if we are able to "play the field wisely". The whole movement in precision medicine and personalized medicine opens the doors for precision diagnostics. Specialized diagnostics in many, many fields, including autoimmunity, allergy, endocrinology, molecular genetics, cancer and many other infectious and non-infectious diseases bring great opportunities to our field. This is accompanied by the new developments in Bioinformatics with artificial intelligence, the development of novel-diagnostic algorithms etc.

Do you think medical biochemistry professionals are ready for the emerging technologies such as Digitalization, Laboratory Diagnostic Algorithms, AI, ML, Integrative Diagnostics, Big Data? Do you believe in Partnership model for efficient integration and adoption of emerging technologies and innovations?

This is a shift of paradigm. This also requires that we train and educate the next generation appropriately. This includes academic and non-academic professionals in our field. Bioinformatics will play a much larger role in education and training as before.

Do you think your society members participate and/or contribute enough to EFLM activities? Do they know the advantages to be EFLM Academy membership, for example, the unique educational resource "Syllabus course", free attendance to the recently held 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference, its sessions were recorded and are available for one year?

The German Society always played an active role in international activities. I myself am very proud for the honor to serve as a president of the world congress of laboratory medicine (IFCC) in 2011. At that time this was the largest international congress ever which we could hold in Berlin. Just recently Prof. Karl Lackner served as congress president for EuroMedLab in Munich 2022, and many other colleagues, such as Prof. Michael Neumaier and Prof. Klaus-Peter Kohse are serving in various capacities in international societies. However, there is always enough room and space for more involvement. We are ready to do so!

What do you think about the ongoing and recent EFLM activities/initiatives? Do you have suggestions to increase communication and cooperation with EFLM? What you like and dislike about EFLM

Most important is to attract the next generation to our field. This includes physician, scientist and technician. At least here in Germany we have a great demand for specialists! Currently there are retiring more individuals than we generate new specialists. The need is enormous. So EFLM can play a huge role in recruiting, educating and training the next generation. Whether this is already at university and medical school level or in other capacities. We are ready for cooperation.

Some Personal questions…
Please introduce yourself with a few sentences.

I always wanted to become a pediatrician, I started my training in pediatrics. Then I spent four years in the United States at the

National Jewish Medical Center in Denver Colorado to complete my training in Clinical Immunology. A reunification provided huge opportunity to move back to Germany, so I started as a senior physician at the Charité hospital in Berlin, where I received my specialization in laboratory medicine. 1999 I was recruited as Professor and head of department at the Philipps-University in Marburg, which has a long lasting track record of Immunology (the first Nobel laureate Emil von Behring was in Marburg as well). Our specialization is in Non-Communicable Disease, gene-environment interaction, the microbiome and the development of novel-diagnostic and therapeutic avenues.

In your professional career, you have served in many leading roles both in your country and internationally. What was your motivation?

We as university Professors have a responsibility to give something back to our society. I'm always highly motivated to help to build a better environment. For this reasons I'm serving in several in national and international societies in various capacities.

Could you share your way in biochemistry? Why did you choose this field? What do you like about your current job? Do you think that you chose the right job for you? If you have another chance?

As mentioned above I entered the field coming from clinics. I think this clinical background helps a lot to move laboratory medicine forward.

What would be your advice to young scientists who wish to pursue their career in laboratory medicine?

There is no better field than laboratory medicine to integrate

clinical work and research. This integration, the access to patient samples, the availability of novel an exciting technology is a perfect fit for excellent science. So, if you are interested in science, consider laboratory medicine as your specialty!

Do you have some hobbies? What are the things outside of your work that you are passionate about? How do you like to spend you free time?

First of all, physical exercise is very important in these management jobs. So, I'm a runner, not Marathon anymore, but in the past. I'm very much interested in the classics, whether it is opera or concerts. I'm a Rotarian and active member in my local club and I'm serving at the governing body of the Elisabeth Church, one of the leading cathedrals in Germany.

NEWS FROM EFLM FUNCTIONAL UNITS

Report from the EFLM bursary recipient Judit Gonda attending training experience via EFLMLabX

Reported by Judit Gonda, Hungary

I was honoured to take part in the EFLM LabX program and to have the opportunity to spend a month between mid-November and mid-December 2022 at the laboratory of Cliniques Universitaires Saint-Luc, UCLouvain, in Brussels, Belgium (www.saintluc.be). Professor Damien Gruson, the Head of the Laboratory generously offered a visit to his laboratory to exchange knowledge in the field of cardiology and endocrinology.

I am a clinical laboratory pharmacist, working in the Medical Centre, Hungarian Defense Forces, Budapest, Hungary. The aim of my visit was to observe the daily routine work in Clinical chemistry and Immunochemistry and to observe the measurement and evaluation of cardiac biomarkers. Hopefully, in my workplace, I can use the good practice I have seen at Saint-Luc laboratory to enhance and provide the best possible care for patients with cardiovascular diseases, and to fulfil an unmet need in the hospital's cardiovascular management. In Brussels, I have also experienced the future goal of medical labs. Saint-Luc laboratory also would like to implement green and sustainable practices and improve its sustainability performance: one step toward that is to cease performing radioimmunoassay tests and seek alternatives, such as ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) or automated immunoassays.

During my time at Saint-Luc, I was involved in several mini-scientific projects related to cardiology; I was allowed to perform the tests by myself and then helped my Belgian colleagues evaluate the results. I had daily meetings with Professor Gruson to talk about the projects and lab work: his attitude is exemplary both professionally and personally. I also had the opportunity to look at the daily work and practice of this ISO-accredited laboratory, and my colleagues showed me around each segment of the lab. The atmosphere at work was very friendly and inclusive, my colleagues were chatty and never refused to offer a helping hand. They made it easy to integrate into their team. I learned good working practices from them and Professor Gruson, especially their organizing of work, their precise and responsible working methods and I also got to know the huge range of tests they perform. I loved the multicultural team and it is not an overstatement that we had a happy family atmosphere with my colleagues there, we even rooted together for the teams of the Football World Cup 2022! Frankly, we had no language barriers, English was our main language, but I could also learn some French in Belgian dialect. There was also great communication and contact between clinicians and lab personnel: they value that the lab provides a safe and rapid-acting background for patient care and aids clinicians to make the best therapeutical decisions for patients in need.

Besides the work at Saint-Luc I also enjoyed professional events while there. Professor Gruson took me to the Annual Meeting of the Royal Belgian Society of Laboratory Medicine (www.rbslm.be) and to trainings and workshops relevant to me. I also participated in their regular journal club on endocrinology, something that I find useful to stay up to date with new trends in science.

The city of Brussels got me at first sight: walking at Grand Place, looking out to the capital of Europe from the sphere of the Atomium, staring at the Christmas tree in the inner city and eating waffles, fries and pralines in Christmas spirit was wonderful. There are plenty of green parks in Brussels to go for a run or just enjoy free time after work. Also, the Belgian towns are attractive: one month was not enough to experience even a bit of the country but I enjoyed visiting the lovely Brugge, the historic Ghent and the metropolitan Antwerp. Also, being on the seaside of the Northern Sea was beyond my imagination, even if the weather was bone-chilling there.

I absolutely enjoyed the LabX program in Brussels, which was generously supported by the EFLM LabX scholarship. I am thankful to EFLM and Saint-Luc laboratory for this memory of a lifetime! I encourage lab professionals to take the opportunity and visit other labs and learn from each other and experience different perspectives. *Merci beaucoup au laboratoire des Cliniques Universitaires Saint-Luc!*

VACANCIES IN THE EFLM FUNCTIONAL UNITS

Vacancies in functional units under the EFLM Committees

Reported by Silvia Terragni, EFLM Office

EFLM Full National Society Members are invited to send nominations for the following open positions:

WG "Register" (WG-R) – Deadline to apply 20 February
1 Young Scientist Full Member (≤ 35 years of age at the time of appointment)

WG "Promotion & Publications" (WG-PP) – Deadline to apply 1 March
1 Full Member

Click on the above positions to know more about the requirements and the evaluation's procedure.
The term of office will be for 2 years (Jan 2023 - Dec 2024). The position could be renewable for other two more terms if the work for the Group is deemed essential at that time. The work is mainly conducted by e-mail and teleconferencing, the WG usually meets once per year.
Procedure for applications: each National Societies Full Member of EFLM and in good standing with the membership fee can submit one nomination using the form circulated to the National Society's representatives to be sent back to silvia.terragni@eflm.eu. A brief plan of the applicant's contribution to the aims and objectives of the relevant Working Group must be included in the form. Candidates must be officially recommended by their National Society through a formal letter of support. Applicants who are not selected as full members may be eligible for corresponding membership.

PAST EFLM EVENTS

Past EFLM webinars

Reported by Aleš Kvasnička, Member of the EFLM Communication Committee

At the end of 2022 and start of 2023, two great EFLM Academy webinars were held at the EFLM e-Learning platform. Webinar participants could attend interesting lectures about the artificial intelligence in laboratory medicine and evidence-based laboratory medicine. If you missed one of these amazing webinars, we strongly recommend you to visit EFLM eLearning platform and listen to on demand webinar. If you are not EFLM Academy member sign up here (webinars are available only for EFLM Academy members).

On 13th December 2022 a live webinar was held concerning artificial Intelligence in laboratory medicine. This webinar covered a hot topic that we will be encountering more and more often, and that is artificial intelligence in laboratory medicine. It has become unfeasible for laboratory specialists to last and interpret the amount of data and average medical laboratory produces per day, despite missing information on medical indication of the test request. Conclusively, the next step must be to implement electronic assistance to screen this data and provide proposals on follow-up testing or interpretation, based on probability calculations. In this lecture, Janne Cadamuro (Dept. of Laboratory Medicine, University Hospital Salzburg, Paracelsus Medical University, Salzburg, Austria) will provide an overview over some basic aspects of artificial intelligence, current applications in health care and especially in laboratory medicine. Additionally, you will hear about the benefits, the limitations, regulations and possible hazards when implementing artificial intelligence algorithms.

On 10th January 2023 we held a webinar focused on evidence-based laboratory medicine led by Andrea Rita Horvath (Australia) - SEALS North, Dept of Clinical Chemistry, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, Sydney, Australia. The main learning objectives covered: 1) the importance of asking the right question and how to formulate a PICO question, 2) The importance of study design for providing unbiased, high quality evidence in laboratory medicine, 3) Searching, critically appraising and synthesizing the evidence and 4) Evidence-based guidelines and laboratory practice.

UPCOMING EFLM EVENTS

5th Symposium CELME 2023. Analytical Performance Specifications (APS): moving from models to practical recommendations

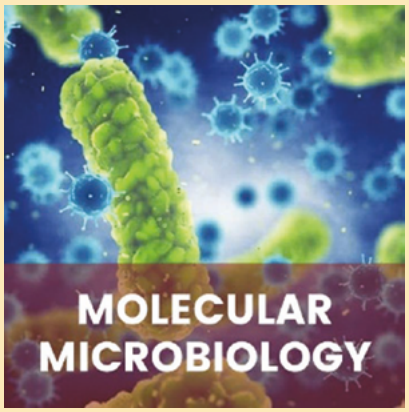
Reported by Silvia Cattaneo, EFLM Office

Do you know CELME? CELME is a biennial Symposium jointly organized by EFLM and the Czech Society of Clinical Biochemistry and takes place in Prague in the historical venue of the Carolinum Charles University.
The CELME Symposium is the place where to share the latest innovative thinking in the delivery of the best laboratory medicine activities and to learn from expert innovators presenting new ways of solving financial, quality and organizational problems of laboratories.
The 2023 edition is dedicated to Analytical Performance Specifications and the aim of the conference is to go through and discuss the three different models agreed by the Milan 2014 EFLM Strategic Conference to set Analytical Performance Specifications for the medical laboratory and to give practical examples on how this can be done. Symposium Chairs are: Prof. Sverre Sandberg, Prof. Mauro Panteghini and Prof. Tomáš Zima.
Click here to access the detailed scientific programme
There is a limited number of seats since organizers can only accommodate 120 participants, therefore those interested are invited to arrange the on-line registrations as soon as possible.
Further information at: http://celme2023.cz

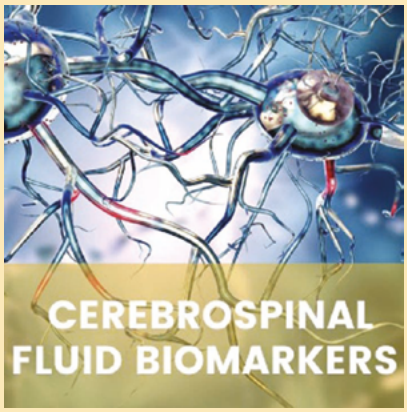
Forthcoming EFLM webinars

Reported by Ales Kvasnicka, Member of the EFLM Communication Committee

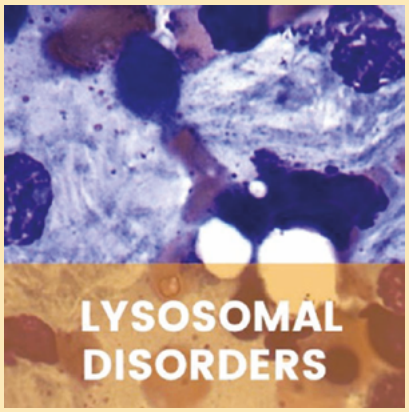
In 2023, we have already many live EFLM webinars available, look at the EFLM e-learning platform! The webinars are an exclusive benefit for the EFLM Academy Members; if you are not yet an EFLM Academy member sign up here.



Fast and furious – integration of (not only) molecular methods for faster results in the microbiology lab.
Date: 7th February 2023 at 18:00 CET time.



Cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers for neurodegenetative dementias.
Date: 28th February 2023 at 18:00 CET time.



Diagnosis of Gaucher disease and other lysosomal disorders.
Date: 7th March 2023 at 18:00 CET time.

Monitoring the performance of a measurement system for its intended clinical use.
Date: 21st March 2023 at 18:00 CET time.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD IN THE EFLM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Reported by Silvia Cattaneo, EFLM Office

A warm welcome to the new incoming National Society officers and a great thank you to the outgoing EFLM National Representatives and National Society Presidents for the support to EFLM activities during their terms of office.

Société Francaise de Biologie Clinique
Prof. Katell Peoc'h (Faculté de Médecine Xavier Bichat, Université de Paris) is the new President of the Société Francaise de Biologie Clinique replacing Prof. Vincent Sapin. While, Dr. Marie Lenski (Toxicology Dept, University Hospital Center of Lille) is the new EFLM National Representative replacing Prof. Joelle Goudable.

Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia
Prof. Snezana Jovicic (Dept for Medical Biochemistry, University of Belgrade) is the new President of the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia replacing Dr Zorica Šumarac.

NEWS FROM EFLM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

XXII Serbian Congress of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine and 16th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan Region Laboratory Medicine Management: Leadership Skills for Effective Laboratory

Reported by Snežana Jovičić, Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia

After the postponement of two years, caused by the global pandemic, on 12–14th September 2022, the Serbian Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia (SMBS) had the pleasure to organize the 22nd Serbian Congress of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine with international participation together with the 16th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan Region. The meetings were organized together with the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Pharmacy, and under the auspices of IFCC, EFLM, Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF), Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development, and Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia.

We had the pleasure to welcome Prof. Mario Plebani, President-Elect of EFLM, who greeted the audience on behalf of EFLM President and the Executive Board. His presence was enabled by the EFLM program "Invite an EFLM Executive Board Representative at your National Congress!". SMBS was very happy to host prof. Plebani and is thankful to the EFLM for supporting our national congress in this way. Prof. Plebani opened the Congress with the remarkable plenary lecture "Laboratory medicine in the era of COVID-19: lessons for the future".

Exceptionally, since the global pandemic interfered and affected our profession in a particular way, the Scientific Board decided to dedicate it two plenary lectures. The other, immediately following the lecture of prof. Plebani, described the local experiences and practically was the opening lecture of the Symposium for Balkan Region. It was entitled "Laboratory management in the new normal", presented by Prof. Dunja Rogić from the University Hospital Center Zagreb, Croatia.

After the plenary lectures, the Award of the Foundation "Magistra Milica Marković" was presented. The Foundation recognizes and awards medical biochemists or laboratories for promoting the technological and organizational work principles of clinical laboratories, improving the quality of laboratory services, and for promoting the profession. This year's laureate were the "Aqualab" laboratories.

The 16th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan region drew a lot of attention from colleagues from the neighbouring countries. This Symposium continued the fourteen years long tradition of EFLM Symposiums for Balkan Region. In 2019 it was renamed to Belgrade Symposium for Balkan Region, when the pandemic postponed the consecutive one for two years. The first session was dedicated to the professional challenges in the era of innovational technologies. The speakers in this session were Gilbert Wieringa, Wytze Oosterhuis and Snežana Jovičić. In his talk entitled "Meeting the leadership challenge of disruptive innovation", Gilbert Wieringa indicated the emerging leadership challenges for specialists in laboratory medicine as the consequence of the 21st century artificial intelligence driven algorithms that are reducing the need for expert human resource. Wytze Oosterhuis presented the added value by interpretative commenting, as one of the activities that can support physicians and help to improve patient treatment outcomes, reflective testing, but also the challenges it is facing. Snežana Jovičić closed the first session by presenting the results of the EFLM Working Group on Patient Focused Laboratory Medicine study on reliability and benchmarking of smartphone applications that are using laboratory medicine data.

The second session was dedicated to the challenges in laboratory medicine management of effective laboratories. The Chair of the EFLM Profession Committee, prof. Evgenija Homšak, presented the possibilities for professional development of laboratory medicine professionals in and through EFLM countries, describing the tools and opportunities available. The current issues in accreditation in laboratories was presented by Prof. Dunja Rogić, while Prof. Nataša Bogavac-Stanojević (University of Belgrade – Faculty of Pharmacy) talked about the importance of laboratory guidelines for medical laboratory practical work, being the member of the EFLM Working Group Guidelines. The session was closed by Prof. Katerina Tosheska Trajkovska (University of Skopje – Medical Faculty, North Macedonia) with her inspiring talk about managing and leadership in medical laboratories.

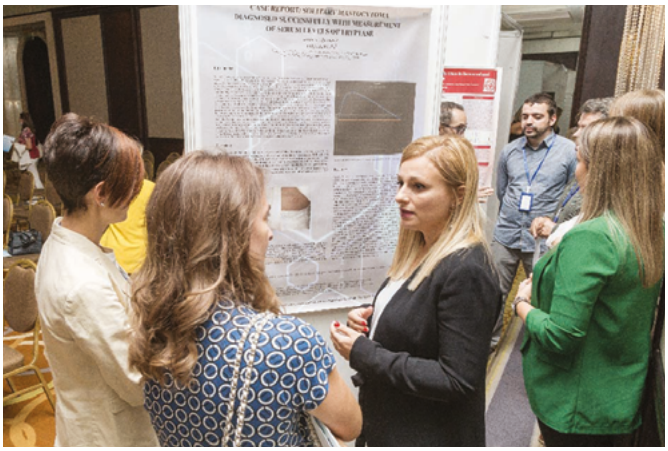
The 22nd Serbian Congress of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine started with a session dedicated to the use of patient results in medical laboratories. This session, dealing with the current and very much discussed issues, started with the introductory talk of Prof. Svetlana Ignjatović about the implementation of patient-based real time quality control. Dr Vera Lukić demonstrated how can the moving

average procedure be used as a continuous quality control in medical laboratories, while Prof. Neda Milinković presented the use of patient results for calculation of reference intervals.
The following session was dedicated to improving children's health through laboratory medicine. This session covered a wide range of particular issues and challenges of medical biochemistry in pediatric medicine, from new biomarkers of acute kidney injury (presented by Prof. Dušan Paripović) and the diagnostic challenges in the delayed puberty (by Prof. Rade Vuković), through the applications of new biomarkers of sepsis in neonatology (by Dr Ana Đorđević Vujičić) and the role of medical laboratory in the diagnosis and monitoring of co-morbidities in type 1 diabetes melitus (by Dr Dragana Bojanin), to the laboratory diagnosis of allergies in children (by Dr Iva Perović Blagojević). The closing session of the second day dealt with another specific topic, the role of the clinical laboratory in female reproductive health management. The particular issues, from the potential of use of biochemical parameters in risk assessment of pregnancy complications (presented by Dr Daniela Ardalić) and the diagnostic accuracy of tests of ovarian reserve (by Prof. Aleksandra Stefanović), through the very controversial topic of the role of sexual steroids in women and men over 50 years of age (presented by the remarkable Prof. Svetlana Vujović), to the role of iron metabolism in pregnancy outcome (by Dr Danica Ćujić), kept the audience's attention even in the late afternoon.
The closing day started with the discussion regarding the novel biomarkers in the era of personalized medicine. The lectures covered several fields of the current research in this domain, from the mighty of role of pharmacogenetics in precision medicine in oncology (presented by Dr Milena Čavić) and the advanced lipid status biomarkers in colorectal cancer (by Prof. Aleksandra Zeljković), to the potential and perspective of galectins as biomarkers (by Dr Žanka Bojić Trbojević) and the challenges in laboratory diagnostics of thyroid disorders (by Prof. Bosa Mirjanić Azarić).
Traditionally, the last session was Forum of young researchers. Introduced three congress editions ago, this section aspires to be an ideal place for young scientists, laboratory professionals and students to interact and share ideas. This time, the Forum was dedicated to the opportunities and possibilities that PhD studies enable in professional achievements. Before presenting the results of the latest research of PhD students at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Pharmacy Department of Medical Biochemistry, the participants could learn about the expectations, possibilities, and potential for successful international career development of PhDs in IVD industry from Dr Gordana Dmitrašinović (Product Manager at Makler d.o.o) and Dr Tijana Krnjeta Janićijević (International Medical Affairs Manager at Roche Diagnostics International Ltd., Global Medical and Scientific Affairs CPS).

Between the sessions the promotion of two monographs, recently published by the SMBS, took place. One was "Scientific Foundation "Professor Ivan Berkeš"", dedicated to the life and work of the esteemed professor Ivan Berkeš, to the review of the previous scientific conferences organized to honor his legacy, also to the Foundation "Professor Ivan Berkeš", and to the laureates of its annual award. All 48 laureates that received this award from 1998 to this day were invited and they received their copy of the book. The other monograph presented was "Professional Activities of Serbian Laboratory Medicine Specialists in Balkan Region", dedicated to the history of Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation and the role of SMBS as one of the founders and its *spiritus movens*. Both books were authored by Prof. Nada Majkić Singh and Prof. Snežana Jovičić.
During these three days Belgrade hosted almost 300 participants from Serbia and neighboring countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Montenegro). The Congress passed in the spirit of exchanging experience, vivid discussions during the lectures, but also at the poster session, showing how much the in-presence meetings and events were missed during the previous pandemic years. We all hope that these days are behind us.

One of the past laureates of "Professor Ivan Berkeš" Foundation Award for the best student of the University of Belgrade–Faculty of Pharmacy, Prof. Miron Sopić, receives the copy of the monograph from Prof. Nada Majkić-Singh.

Discussions between sessions (Prof. Mario Plebani, Dr Gilbert Wieringa, Prof. Evgenija Homšak, Prof. Dunja Rogić, Dr. Wytze Oosetrhuis)



Poster session discussions

Prof. Mario Plebani during the opening plenary lecture

The audience during one of the session

Prof. Dunja Rogić during the plenary lecture

At the Opening ceremony, from left to right: Prof. Snežana Jovičić (Congress Technical Organizing Board Chair), Dr Iva Perović Blagojević (Congress Organizing Board Chair), Prof. Branislava Miljković (President of the Association of Pharmaceutical Associations of Serbia), Prof. Zorica Šumarac (President of SMBS), Prof. Nada Majkić-Singh (Executive Director of the SMBS), Prof. Vesna Spasojević Kalimanovska (Congress Scientific Board Chair), Prof. Snežana Savić (Vice Dean for Science and International Relations of the University of Belgarde – Faculty of Pharmacy), Dr Wytze Oosterhuis, Prof. Evgenija Homšak, Prof. Mario Plebani, and Dr Gilbert Wieringa.

2022 Turkish Biochemistry Society (TBS) International Congress / 33rd National Biochemistry Congress

Reported by Oytun Portakal, Secretary of Turkish Biochemistry Society

We held our second congress post-pandemic in Ilıca Congress Center, Çeşme, İzmir this year. It was not easy, it was our 33rd year. As in every congress, we were very excited. October 29 was very meaningful to us; because it was the day that Atatürk declared as republic of Turkey. Every year, we aim to combine this happiness with knowledge.

Our international congress was pleasant and fulfilling in terms of science. More than 650 participants; 33 companies and about 80 company representatives were participated; thanks to all. Total three courses were held before, during and after the congress including the subjects of electrophoresis, statistics and cell culture. Participation was high, and all were very effective. In this year, we continued to support biochemistry students during our congress, provided scholarship in terms of accommodation and registration to 84 students.

In the opening lectures, Xavier Coumoul spoke about the importance of microenvironment and environment in breast cancer as a FEBS National Lecturer. Elie Fux from IFCC talked about the importance of LC-MS/MS for today and possible usage areas in the future.

We had Jerka Dumic from FEBS and Klaus Kohse and Tomris Özben from EFLM as speakers. EFLM president Tomris Özben talked about green labs and Doğan Yücel mentioned wastewater problem. Nino Sincic from University of Zagreb talked about epigenetics in prostate cancer. Dr. Cas Weykamp from the Netherlands talked about the current importance of HbA1c and the effect of Hemoglobin S. Sheri Scott, Jorien Claes were there as speakers and attended symposiums.

Omics technologies were other topics that were discussed. Talat Yalçın, Sevcan Atay, Okan Doğan were the speakers during the proteomics-metabolomics-transcriptomics trilogy session. Cell measurements in clinical laboratories were also discussed as another topic.

İbrahim Karakuş from the Ministry of Health of Turkey attended to our congress and he talked about Regional Laboratories and Test-Based Reference Laboratories, which are the projects of the Ministry of Health. Compliance with the European Union In Vitro Diagnostic Regulation in Turkey, Performance Evaluation Studies were explained. Those were very informative talks.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning were discussed in the laboratory with examples by Deniz İlhan Topçu, Hikmet Can Çubukçu, Habib Özdemir and Murat Cihan. It was quite interesting, especially for young biochemists. The neuroscience session was quite remarkable; such as the relationship between epilepsy and astroglia and the role of zebrafish in neurological disease mechanisms; Emre Yahşi and Çağhan Kızıl talked.

Clinical Toxicology and Therapeutic Drug Monitoring were discussed in another panel, by Sedat Abuşoğlu, Saliha Aksun and Başak Bağcı. Rana Sanyal spoke about the situation of the journey of nanobiotechnological drugs from the laboratory to the clinic in Turkey. A panel on "Unnecessary and Malicious" Use of Laboratory Tests with Insufficient Evidence was held by Mehmet Şeneş, Muhittin Serdar and Ali Ünlü.

It was focused on whether Personalized Medicine is a dream or a reality. Aging and its biochemical effects discussed in a panel; geriatric reference intervals were explained by Yeşim Özarda. Conversely, Klaus Kohse spoke about pediatric reference intervals.

Many forums have been organized, including analytical problems and solutions in the clinical laboratories, problems and solutions of biochemistry specialists, young researchers forum and on FEBS.

Satellite symposiums were held every day during the congress including BNP, automation, specimen management, HbA1c, nephelometric assays and ISO 15189 QC requirements, from IVD companies of Beckman Coulter Co., ROCHE Diagnostics, BIOBAK, BD Co., SEBIA, SIEMENS Healthineers and BIORAD.

Nazmi Özer Science Award 2022 were deployed. Contestants were excited and it was a nice awarding. Specific to this year, one "FEBS-Open Bio Poster Award" was given.

We had "firsts" in this congress, for example; this year, for the first time, we started to give a science award on behalf of our association's journal (Turkish Journal of Biochemistry). We also implemented the Student Mentoring Program for the first time. For this, we formed groups of about 8-10 students and had a Biochemistry Specialist provide scientific mentorship to each group. We aim to continue these "firsts" in our next congresses. Overall, it was a scientifically fruitful congress; seems like a bridge between basic and clinical sciences. It brought people together and helped them happy.

The Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEQCML) held their II Meeting on External Quality Assurance Programs

Reported by Sandra Bullich

This 15th of November the Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEQCML) organized their II Meeting on External Quality Assurance Programs under the auspices of EFLM. The session focused on delving into the Program's characteristics and providing practical information for the clinical lab. The conference program included topics such as the introduction of the new Faecal Haemoglobin Program, the recent accreditation of 4 more Programs under the ISO 17043, a detail of the most requested FAQs, a review on the 2021 data to comment on the EQA's state of the art and, lastly, the serum indices quality assurance.
The activities of the Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEQCML), apart from the EQA Programs organization, also involve the sharing of scientific information and the enhancement of its Continuing Education Program through web-based conferences and in person courses. Thus, by organizing these yearly EQA Programs Conferences, SEQCML intends to enrich their EQA Programs.

IFCC NEWS

Reported by Katherina Psarra, Editor of IFCC eNews and Chair eNews WG

President's Message

by Prof K. Adeli IFCC President

Greetings to all of you in the IFCC family and compliments of the holiday season. I wish every one of you good health and happiness! As we reflect on the past year, it is exciting to see the great productivity of the IFCC organization in 2022. Despite starting the year off with high COVID-19 transmission rates, hindering in-person activities, the entire IFCC community remained engaged and continued activity. As the pandemic eased, we were able to ramp up activity to reach many achievements, including the launch of global initiatives, first-ever forums, highly attended live webinars, and so much more. While we faced the challenge of transitioning back to in-person participation, we saw the return of large in-person scientific meetings, including EuroMedLab in Munich, WorldLab in Seoul, and IFCC General Conference in Brussels. These conferences were a huge success, garnering international participation from thousands of attendees.
Looking forward, we are excited to see everyone at EuroMedLab/WorldLab Congress in the fabulous city of Rome during May 21-25, 2023. Attendees can look forward to a very strong scientific program, three satellite meetings as well as the Young Scientist Forum. Currently, we are expanding support for the young scien
tist program by providing many more travel scholarships for young scientists from developing countries to attend this important conference. The conference will also be fully hybrid ensuring that many more laboratory scientists will be able to benefit from regions around the world. More information about this exciting event, such as the program, registration, abstract submission, sponsors, and accommodations can be found at https://2023roma.org/. The IFCC is also working to organize other future events, such as the much-anticipated WordLab 2024, which will be held in the beautiful city of Dubai.
Overall, we at IFCC have continued to build upon progress made in previous years, continuing to "advance excellence in laboratory medicine for better healthcare worldwide", which is something we should all be very proud of. Wishing you a wonderful New Year in 2023!
Khosrow

We concluded the IFCC free Webinars cycle for 2022. We had more than 55.000 registrants, with a constant interest from the attendees all over the world. Each webinar had participants from an average of 107 different countries! The IFCC Live webinar series have made it possible for thousands of laboratory professionals to benefit from this major educational program in countries around the world. The program is also helping to enhance IFCC's visibility globally and is an important way by which IFCC supports its members particularly in developing countries.
The new IFCC live series webinars 2023 already started! Don't miss to register and participate! If you want to be inserted into the IFCC mailing list, send a message to: ifcc@ifcc.org

Calendar of EFLM events and events under EFLM auspices

Do not miss the opportunity to have your event listed here.
Apply for EFLM auspices! For more information visit here or email eflm@eflm.eu

7 February 2023

EFLM Webinar: Fast and furious – integration of (not only) molecular methods for faster results in the microbiology lab
on-line Click here for information

09-10 February 2023

Labquality Days - International Congress on Quality in Laboratory Medicine and Health Technology 2023
Helsinki (FI), Click here for information

28 February 2023

EFLM Webinar: Cerebrospinal fluid biomarkers for neurodegenetative dementias
on-line Click here for information

7 March 2023

EFLM Webinar: Diagnosis of Gaucher disease and other lysosomal disorders
on-line Click here for information

9-10 March 2023

BIOMEDJ 2023
Paris (FR), Click here for information

21 March 2023

EFLM Webinar: Monitoring the performance of a measurement system for its intended clinical use
on-line Click here for information

27-28 March 2023

Biomedica
on-line Click here for information

30-31 March 2023

XX Meeting of the SEQCML Scientific Committee
Madrid (ES), Click here for information

11 April 2023

EFLM Lessons in Immunochemistry - Lesson n. 5: FERTILITY: the role of Anti Mullerian Hormone
on-line Click here for information

14-15 April 2023

15ª Reunião Científica da SPML (20th anniversary)
Oporto (PT), Click here for information

20-21 May 2023

Worldlab-EuroMedLab 2023 Satellite Meeting Clinical mass spectrometry: validation and accreditation of IVD and Laboratory Developed Test (LDT) in the new "Regulation EU 2017/746" era
Rome (IT), Click here for information

21-25 May 2023

EuroMedLab 2023: 25th IFCC-EFLM European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine
Rome (IT), Click here for information

8-10 June 2023
61st Congress of the Hungarian Society of Lab Med
Budapest (HU), Click here for information

27 June 2023

EFLM Lessons in Immunochemistry - Lesson n. 6: ANEMIA
on-line Click here for information

26 September 2023

EFLM Lessons in Immunochemistry - Lesson n. 7: HEPATIC FIBROSIS: the role of laboratory biomarkers in diagnosis and monitoring
on-line Click here for information

27-30 September 2023

BCLF 2023 – 30. Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation Congress and and 2. Montenegrin Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Lab. Medicine
Herceg-Novi, Boka Bay (ME),

12-13 October 2023

5th Symposium CELME 2023. Analytical Performance Specifications (APS): moving from models to practical recommendations
Prague (CZ), Click here for information

6 December 2023

EFLM Lessons in Immunochemistry - Lesson n. 8: CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE predicting the development in apparently healthy individuals: the role of Lp(a)
on-line, Click here for information

13-14 June 2024

9th International Symposium on Critical Care Testing and Blood Gases
Saint Malo (FR), Click here for information