

REPORT ON ECI 2015 - VIENNA

The 4th European Congress of Immunology was held in Vienna from the 6 to 9 of September 2015, where it gathered together all the European Society of Immunology, including NVVI. The congress was a big success as the participants were more than 4000 people with more than 3000 abstracts submitted, not only from European institutes but also from Overseas.

The Scientific Program has been very stimulating, with the possibility to follow four different tracks every day, covering the most recent developments in basic and clinical immunology, namely “Adaptive Immunity”, “Disease”, “Innate Immunity” and “Disease Intervention”. In collaboration with industries/companies several sponsored symposia on “technology development” were also organized, for example focusing on flow-cytometry and diagnostics.

As compared to the previous congress editions, I have appreciated that much more attention was given to immune-related diseases and possible therapeutic intervention. In particular, I found very interesting the symposium “Resolution of Inflammation” organized by the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR), where I have listen at a remarkable talk by Prof. Fons van de Loo from the Radboud UMC of Nijmegen (“Fostering anti-inflammatory mechanisms to stop arthritis”). In this line, a great example of translational research was given by the outstanding presentation of Prof. Linde Meygaard - UMC Utrecht, focused on “The Prevention of collateral damage by immune inhibitory receptors”. Finally, one of the most illuminating talk I have heard was by Prof. Luuk O’Neil from the Trinity College of Dublin, focusing on the emerging interaction between metabolism and immune system.

In line with the mission of the European Federation of Immunological Society (EFIS) to promote the involvement of young members, a large part of posters and oral presentations was given by early-career scientists as PhD students and young post-docs. To further stimulate their participation, specific lectures were also given, as for example “how to publish in scientific journal” and the possibility to meet outstanding Professors in the field during breakfast sessions. In addition, EFIS and NVVI gave economic support in terms of travel grants to facilitate the participation of young researchers that presented their work at the conference. Thanks to this support, during the ECI I could present the work I’m conducting at UMC Utrecht in the group of Prof. Radstake (title: “Targeting microRNAs in plasmacytoid DCs to predict and cease systemic sclerosis development”). This allowed me to have very fruitful discussions with my poster-chairs and other attendees.

As in the past edition, I very much enjoyed ECI because it provided me the unique opportunity to listen at illuminating talks and interact with outstanding scientists in the field. I deeply recommend to any young scientist whose research is linked to immunology to attend the ECI in the future: beside the great scientific program of the congress, it is indeed a true opportunity to start your network in the field. The next appointment is the “International Congress of Immunology” in Melbourne (ICI2016)!