



## **EFB Microbial Physiology Section**

On Saturday 13 November, 2004, at 10:45 the EFB Microbial Physiology Section held a meeting at the Hotel Vila Gale in Tavira, Portugal. All Section Members as well as everyone registered for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Recombinant Protein Production meeting had been invited to attend this open meeting.

### **Minutes**

#### ***1. Apologies for absence***

Apologies had been received from 5 section members.

The Section noted with sympathy the recent illness and operation of Chris Hewitt, and asked the Chairman to write to Chris on their behalf to wish him a full and rapid recovery.

2. Minutes of the Open Meeting of the Section held during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting on Physiology of Yeasts and Filamentous Fungi (PYFF 2) on Saturday 27 March 2004 at VVF Vacances in Anglet, France.

The minutes were accepted, and signed by the Chairman.

#### ***3. Matters arising from the Minutes***

Forthcoming meetings being organised by the Section were reviewed individually later in the Agenda – see below.

#### ***4. Report from the Section Chairman***

##### **(a) Report from the EFB Executive Committee.**

The Federation continues to adapt to its new status as an organisation independent of DECHEMA. EFB currently runs a temporary central office at TU Delft, and a working party is at present considering four bids to establish a permanent Office. These bids were received from to the Technical University of Delft, SEBIOT (Barcelona); University of Liege; and the Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences, Newcastle. The Executive Board of EFB will decide which bid to support at its meeting in Delft in January, and it is hoped that the new contract will take effect from 1 March 2005.

The Chairman reported that several colleagues had commented on the decreasing level of scientific activity within EFB, notable exceptions being the Applied Biocatalysis and Microbial Physiology Sections. There were special problems with the Applied Genomics Section. The source of the problem appeared to be that when the Section abandoned the Applied Genetics name, members of the Board no longer felt identified with the much more general “genomics”, especially as the meetings of the Section now spanned plants and animals as well as micro-organisms. Marco Soria had proposed that the Applied Genomics Section should merge with the Microbial Physiology Section, a point supported by the two active members of the Section Board who attended the Copanello meeting. However, genomics and microbial physiology are both too important for one to be submerged into the other.

- Agreed that, as the Stress meeting being planned for 2006 or 2007 would have a strong genomics base and because Dr Peter Lund had expertise in this area, Marco’s Board would be invited to merge temporarily with the Microbial Physiology Section Board for the organisation of this next major event.
- Also agreed that the Microbial Physiology Section must remain focused on catering for its many active and supportive members to avoid a similar demise.

#### **(b) Membership of the Section Board**

The Chairman drew attention to the excellent work of members of the Section Board in organising three major symposia this year. He welcomed Pau Ferrer as Section Treasurer. Recent communications with our membership had revealed that over 200 E-mail addresses were out of date. The meeting confirmed that Ursula Rinas would act as Membership Secretary, assisting the Central Office in keeping our contact list up to date.

- Agreed that Ligia Saraiva (ITQB, Portugal) should be invited to join the Board as the person responsible for organising the sequel to the Walberberg meeting (see below).
- Peter Lund, University of Birmingham, UK, who would help pioneer a meeting on The Microbial Response to Environmental Stress and has been promised sponsorship by the UK Society for general Microbiology, was also elected unanimously onto the Board.

The Chairman also invited anyone in the audience who wished to become involved in organising Section events, or in any other aspect of EFB activities, to contact him or the relevant Section or Task group Chairman. For more information, please visit the EFB Web ([www.efbweb.org](http://www.efbweb.org)) to see how to become involved.

### **5. Review of recent meetings:**

#### ***(a) Functional Genomics of Pathogenic Bacteria. Copanello, Italy, 6-8 October, 2004.***

This meeting had been organised in cooperation with the EFB Section on Applied Functional Genomics; a third partner was supposed to be associated with the meeting and initially approximately 300 participants were expected. Not one person from the Pharma Medical Biotechnology Section registered for the meeting, and the event had

not been listed in their regular publication. Consequently, attendance (75 participants) was disappointingly low. Meanwhile, the Microbial Physiology Section Chairman had invited an outstanding selection of front line speakers, all of whose meals and accommodation had to be funded. Furthermore, 8 young scientists had been promised a €200 contribution towards their Registration Fee. A small but significant financial deficit was incurred.

- The proposal that the Microbial Physiology Section should cover the costs from its reserves of the bursaries for young scientists (€1600) and also the costs of two speakers who ran a 3-hour micro-array workshop (estimated cost of €750) was approved unanimously.

(b). Arrangements for the next European Congress of Biotechnology, Copenhagen, 25 – 28 August, 2005.

Jeff Cole reported that the Congress is being organised by the Danish Technical University, Copenhagen. The programme will be organised in parallel sessions according to themes, so that participants will find topics of interest throughout the now shortened three-day meeting. The programme has been fixed, with most work being done by the local committee. The Microbial Physiology Section had intended to organise a joint session with the Environmental Biotechnology Section, however, approval from this Section was not obtained because Professor Egli had evidence based upon a survey of its Section members that ECBs were unlikely to attract any significant support from the environmental biotechnology sector.

#### ***6. Review of arrangements for the current meeting.***

Manuel Carrondo report that about 240 participants were registered for the current meeting, which is a significant increase again compared with the previous meeting in Italy. The early selection of the organising committee, industrial committee, the session chair and a few key speakers allowed to integrate most topics of interest, and, as a major feature, to integrate both prokaryotic and eukaryotic expression systems including animal cells and plants. One problem that could not be solved was the low participation from Eastern European countries, including the new EU member states. Measures have to be discussed in the future to increase this number.

The support of FEMS for the meeting is highly appreciated, as is the cooperation with ESACT on this meeting series.

#### ***7. Review of progress in the organisation of the forthcoming Section symposia***

##### ***a) Analysis of Microbial Cells at the Single Cell Level III. Austria. 26 – 29 May 2005.***

Nicole Borth reported on the preliminary programme and the organisational details. The fee (incl. accommodation and meals) has been set to 540 EUR (490 EUR for students sharing a room) for early registration before Feb.28, 2005. FEMS has granted Young Scientist Fellowships. The meeting will take place at the Hotel Panhans, Semmering, Austria. A preliminary programme and registration details are available at:

<http://www.boku.ac.at/iam/singlecell>

The deadline for abstract submission is Dec. 18, 2004.

***b) Physiology of Yeasts and Filamentous Fungi III (PYFF III).***

Diethard Mattanovich reported that the previous meeting PYFF II in Anglet, France earlier this year had been a great success, both scientifically and from the interest of the participants. It was highly appreciated among the participants to organise a follow-up meeting within three years.

Consultations about the organisers and location are still ongoing with a few interested parties, and a decision is expected for end of this year.

***c) International Specialized Symposium on Yeasts (ISSY 2006): Systems biology and metabolic engineering of yeasts***

In the context of yeast physiology the Section will cooperate with the organisers of ISSY 2006, a meeting of the International Commission of Yeasts (ICY). Merja Penttila of VTT, Finland is chair of the organising committee. More information can be obtained from [merja.penttila@vtt.fi](mailto:merja.penttila@vtt.fi). As soon as available, a link will be available on the Section Webpage.

***d) Physiology, Biochemistry and Genetic Regulation of Electron Transfer Reactions in Bacteria: Tomar, Portugal, 19 – 23 March 2006 (sequel to the meeting held 2003 in Walberberg, Germany).***

The Walberberg meeting was over-subscribed, some local registrants having to return home each night because no rooms were available either at the monastery or in the local hotel, and the quality of the science presented was amazingly high. Consequently, it has been agreed to organise a follow-up meeting in Portugal in Spring, 2006. A venue has been confirmed, and the meeting will be co-organised by Dr. Ligia Saraiva and the Section Chairman. More information will be made available as soon as possible.

***e) Microbial Response to Environmental Stress***

Dr Peter Lund (Birmingham) had offered to help the Section organise a meeting on the microbial response to stress. His research interests include heat shock response and investigations into single ring chaperonins, and span different bacteria from nitrogen fixing bacteria to *E. coli* and pathogens like *Campylobacter jejuni*. He has recently been elected onto the Group Committee of the SGM Physiology, Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics group, and the SGM Council had agreed to cover the financial costs of his activities helping the Microbial Physiology Section. JAC agreed to consult with Pete how best to take this activity forward.

***f) Follow up of the Recombinant Protein Production meeting***

It was discussed among the present Section members whether and when a follow up conference should be organised. Given the high interest, and the great quality of the present meeting, the plan was greatly approved. As there was no clear decision between

two and three years interval, a two years interval was selected. Colleagues from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Pau Ferrer and Antonio Villaverde, volunteered as organisers, which was greatly acknowledged by all present members. Exact time and location will be communicated later.

#### **8 *Sources of information on Section activities.***

Details of all of the Section activities, including the current membership of the Section Committee, can be obtained from the Section website ([www.tu-berlin.de/biotec/mibi/AG\\_Lang/efb/](http://www.tu-berlin.de/biotec/mibi/AG_Lang/efb/)) or the EFB Website: (<http://efbweb.org>). The Section Chairman and all members expressed their thanks to the Website Manager, Christine Lang for keeping the information up to date efficiently.

9. Any other business.

Peter Neubauer announced the **3rd Oulu Summer School in Bioprocess Engineering (OSSiBE3): From Molecular Physiology to System Biology**, Mon 6th - Sat 11th June, 2005 (proposed time).

Information is available on <http://www.oulu.fi/bioprocess/3rd-ossibe-2005.htm> .

- The Section welcomed the opportunity to be associated with the Summer School and agreed to advertise it on its Section Website.

#### **10. *Next meeting of the Section.***

Hotel Panhans, Semmering, 26 -28 May 2005.

Diethard Mattanovich (Secretary) and Jeff Cole (Chairman); November 2004.