



### **European Federation of Biotechnology Microbial Physiology Section**

The Open Meeting of the Section was held at Porto Conte Ricerche Srl, S.P. 55 Porto Conte/Capo Caccia during the Fifth Recombinant Protein Production meeting at 17.30 h on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Everyone registered for the RPP meeting was invited to attend.

#### **Attendees:**

Jeff Cole, Diethard Mattanovich, Gen Larsson, Danilo Porro, Pau Ferrer, Ursula Rinas, Peter Neubauer, Eva Hostinova, Yoav Peleg, Peter Becker, Manfred Saller, Michael Sauer, Bo Xu, Enrico Berardi, Yossi Shiloach, Ran Zichel, Narendar K. Khatri, Filipe Mensalhao, Merja Penttilä.

#### **Agenda**

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

Apologies for absence were received from Paola Branduardi, Peter Lund, and Christine Lang.

##### **2. Minutes of the last Section meeting**

The Minutes of the last meeting have been attached to the meeting invitation, and posted on the Section Website.

The Minutes were accepted unanimously.

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

The current status of forthcoming Section events was reviewed later during the meeting.

No additional items were raised.

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

###### **(a) Changes to the Section Board.**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that there is an open invitation to join the Section Board to anyone who can spare a little time each month for Section activities. Currently the key Section board members and their responsibilities are: Jeff Cole, Chairman; Diethard Mattanovich, Secretary; Pau Ferrer, Treasurer; Christine Lang, Website Manager; Ursula Rinas, Sponsorship Manager; Joost Teixeira de Mattos, Secretary of ECB.

(b) Election of the Section Board.

The membership of the Section Board was approved as currently composed.

(c) Report from the EFB Executive Board.

The Chairman reminded the Section that the Federation is currently heavily supported by the Catalan government with an annual subsidy of 100.000 € per year. This supports the salaries and Office administration of three staff, but the subsidy is due to end next year. Consequently, the EFB Management Committee is looking for a strategy to become independent. EFB is widely respected in Brussels. However, it relies on voluntary work from its members. The Executive Board recognises that, with more funding and more active members, it could be more effective in becoming the voice of Biotechnology in Europe.

A current strategic review recognises that Section and the Executive Board interact poorly, and the Executive Board would like Sections to contribute more to central activities. Currently Sections make use of the EFB website to advertise their activities to the membership, but make no financial contribution towards the costs involved. Consequently, JAC had proposed that there might be a levy of 20 € per person registered for any activity that is announced via the EFB website. The Chairman reported that the Applied Biocatalysis Section is against it, and ESBES would not support the proposal unless benefits to the Section had been defined far more clearly. Key points made were:

- The Central Office does not currently benefit Sections.
- There has been neither administrative nor financial support from the Central Office for previous meetings.
- The Central Office is unable to offer Sections what they need most urgently, which is legal background, accounting and invoicing etc.
- In contrast to the scientific sections, the Central office is far more concerned with Brussels politics than with fundamental science.
- The €20 levy could easily turn a marginal surplus from a Section meeting into a deficit, resulting in loss of sound Section finances.
- The Microbial Physiology Section currently benefits greatly from sponsorship from FEMS, but this would be withdrawn if any of the registration fees were to be used to support the administration costs of another European Federation.

Following a short debate, it was decided that the Section would be sympathetic to this proposal only if there were clear and agreed benefits. These must include far greater accountability from the Central Office of the impact of EFB on the discussions in Brussels, especially in the formulation of framework programmes.

To report that plans are being set for the 2009 Congress that will be held in Barcelona; that the first issue of the EFB Journal “New Biotechnology” has been published by Elsevier; and that a greatly improved website is being

maintained by our staff at the EFB Central Office in Barcelona. In his role as EFB Vice-President, JAC is leading a Strategic Review of EFB organisation and activities.

Key issues that remain to be resolved include how to:

- improve the income stream to support EFB Central Office and initiatives
- increase the visibility of EFB as “The voice of biotechnology in Europe”
- integrate more effectively scientific activities of the Sections with broader lobbying activities of the Federation on behalf of biotechnology industries in Europe, and European Society
- respond effectively and rapidly to issues related to biotechnology as they arise
- build upon the success of the 2007 Barcelona Congress
- improve the service to EFB members by the EFB Central Office in Barcelona.

Members are reminded that contributions to the EFB Journal New Biotechnology, especially excellent original scientific papers, would be welcomed by the Editor responsible for Microbial Physiology, Professor Pau Ferrer. The journal is keen to receive papers. Section members were invited to suggest reviews or commentaries, and to submit their research papers.

(d) Contribution from the Section to ECB 2009: invitation to propose a topic for a workshop organised by the section. Peter Neubauer suggested that a suitable topic for a workshop might be “Large Scale Physiology”.

(e) Summary of Conference Proceedings for publication in the EFB Journal “New Biotechnology”.

A review of the current meeting will be compiled by Yana Sevastyanovich, Sara Alfasi and Jeff Cole.

(f) Late items of business.

DECHEMA had supported the EFB until a few years ago, and remain sympathetic to opportunities to support Section activities in the future, especially in providing help with the organisation of Section meetings. The Section welcomed this initiative, and noted that this item will be discussed in Birmingham between Willi Meyer and Jeff Cole in October. This proposal was accepted by all participants.

## 5. Treasurer’s report

Pau Ferrer reminds that the main source of income of the Section is based on an agreement made with the meetings organisers: in case of budget surplus, half of it is allocated to the Section to provide a safety net and a refundable float for the organisation of future meetings, and to provide scholarships for young scientists.

(a) Section finances. As reported in the Section's meeting held in Barcelona during the EBC13 conference (Sept 2007), the previous balance of the Section funds consists of: Account balance September 2006: 17,360.26 € Incomes (Dec 2006-Sept 2008): 3,000.00 € (=50% of the total surplus of the RPP4) Expenses (Dec 2006-Sept 2008): July 2007: 5,000.00 € (Deposit Hotel RPP5-2008, Sardinia, Sept 2008), to be returned. Feb 2008: 696.93 € (Support travel expenses conference chair of the Microbial response to environmental stress, Austria, May 2009), to be returned. Overall current balance (Sept. 2008): 14,648.83 € Also, a surplus of 8,797.87 € was generated in the recent meeting "Analysis of microbial cells at the single cell level III", held at Elbresidenz, Bad Schandau, in Germany, in May 2008. The meeting had been superbly organised by Susann Mueller and had been a scientific success, but it was regrettable that the local University had imposed a 10% charge for handling the meeting accounts. Noted that 4,000.00 € will be transferred to the Section's account in the coming months.

(b) Financial outcome of the previous RPP meeting held in Barcelona in 2006: It was reported in the Section's meeting held at the ECB13 (see corresponding minutes for details). Briefly, the surplus was 6000 €, and 3000 were transferred to the Section's account in December 2006.

(d) Likely financial outcome of the current meeting. JAC reported that the Section agreed two years ago to approve the under-writing of any potential financial loss incurred in the current meeting: a conservative budget has been set by the organisers in liaison with the Section Chairman. Enrico Berardi reported that in addition to industrial sponsors (as listed below), FEMS and the European Science Foundation had provided sponsorship for the current meeting, and that the likely outcome of the meeting is break even or a small surplus.

Sponsorship for the 5th Recombinant Protein Production Meeting (held on 24-28 September 2008 in Sardinia, Italy, <http://www.ing.univpm.it/rpp2008/>) was requested and obtained from:

NovoNordisk 2,500,-- EUR  
Novozymes 2,000,-- EUR  
Novartis, SRL 1,500,-- EUR  
CMC Biologics 1,000,-- EUR  
Lonza 1,000,-- EUR  
Sanofi-Aventis 1,000,-- EUR

(e) Brief summary of current financial policy of the Section. Noted that Section meetings are organised by volunteers and administrative costs are kept to an absolute minimum. Consequently meeting budgets and registration fees are low compared with other meetings, but rely upon a large contribution of time and effort from local organisers. This strategy is regarded as risky but ok.

The main risk is the lack of a financial safety net for the single meetings. Therefore the backup of reserve fund is vital for the survival of the Section.

#### 6. Report of other recent Section meetings.

Meeting on Analysis of Microbial Physiology at the Single Cell Level, Bad Schandau, May 2008. Danilo Porro reported on the high quality of scientific presentations, significant progress in the field, and an excellent environment.

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

##### (a) Microbial response to stress. From molecules to systems.

This meeting will be held in Semmering, Austria, in May 2009 and is being organised by Peter Lund, UK, Michael Sauer, AT, and Paola Branduardi, IT. Michael Sauer reported about the upcoming conference "Microbial Stress – from Molecules to Systems" to be held in Semmering, Austria, from May 7th to May 10th 2009. Registration and abstract submission have been opened already. Early registration and abstract submission ends on January 15th 2009. The three themes of the meeting are:

- How organisms detect stress and turn the detection into a response
- Multiple stress responses in the same organism, cross-talk between stresses, and stress networks
- Adaptation of cultures to stress, stress response in large scale cultures

Further information can be found on the homepage:

<http://microbial-stress.fh-campuswien.ac.at/>

##### (b) Physiology of yeasts and filamentous fungi IV (PYFF V).

This next meeting in this series is being organised by Jack Pronk, and colleagues from TU Delft (NL), in 2010.

The previous meeting in Helsinki was highly appreciated. It is hoped that more contributions from the filamentous fungi field can be attracted.

##### (c) Analysis of microbial cells at the single cell level III:

This next meeting in this series is being organised by Gerald Gregori and colleagues, Marseille, France, in 2011.

##### (d) Electron transfer in microbial metabolism and its regulation.

This next meeting in this series will be organised in Scandinavia, probably in Southern Norway, in 2009-2010. Details to follow.

##### (e) Next Recombinant Protein Production meeting.

The Section board has received several proposals for the location of future RPP meetings: Switzerland (or France), Sweden, or Berlin. It is proposed that the potential locations in Switzerland and Sweden shall be evaluated first for the feasibility to host up to 250 participants within the budget frame of the previous meetings. The biannual cycle was approved by all participants.

(f) Invitation to propose other Section activities.

Suggestions for any other activities, including meetings, surveys or the assembly of position papers, were invited.

8. Any other business.

Call for volunteers to help with Section Administration and membership of the Section Committee, especially for help with the organisation of future scientific meetings.

The Section Board is always keen to identify volunteers to join the Section Board to organise specialist meetings, or help with the general running of the Section. Please contact the Chairman or Secretary, if you are interested in helping us.

9. Next meeting of the Section.

This will be held during the September 2009 European Congress of Biotechnology in Barcelona.

Diethard Mattanovich, Section Secretary; September 2008