THE BIOELECTROCHEMICAL SOCIETY

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BES Presidential Address

Perspectives for closing the gap between the EU and US

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In the last few months, something appears to be changing rapidly within the EU's science policy – and not only because of the recent appointment of a new European commissioner for research for a 5-year term. It is not long ago when a different scenario for scientific research - with a particular emphasis in applied science – has been envisaged. In fact, the instruments of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) to fund "networks of excellence" and "integrated projects" in seven priority thematic areas are designed to specifically reinforce the trans-national activities in goal-directed research.

However, many governments now recognize that basic, not just targeted, research is vital for a knowledge-based society. In this novel atmosphere, the Presidents, Chairs and Directors General of 52 European organizations in all scientific disciplines have recently appealed for creating a European Research Council (ERC) (see Letter in Science, August 6, 2004). They emphasize that "Europe has lost significant ground vis-à-vis the United States", and that "It is therefore a matter of urgency to strengthen basic research in Europe and to provide the next generation of scientists with the proper means and working environment". Efforts have to be made to set up a ERC with significant funding power.

Thus a lively debate has been launched in Europe. There is an urgent need for the EU to establish a central agency to allocate resources as they do in the US. The role of the scientific organizations has become increasingly clear in this ongoing debate, and we, in the Bioelectrochemical Society (BES), must be aware of such a historic opportunity to create a European Research Council. Next June, in Coimbra (Portugal), the BES Symposium (http://www.bes-ise-2005.uc.pt) will provide us with an excellent forum to promote global discussion and contribute fresh ideas.

I am looking forward to seeing you in Coimbra.

Miguel A. De la Rosa
President of the BES

Workshops and schools supported by BES

One of the priority of BES is support of the schools and workshops as a platform in which young researchers could receive new scientific information and could present also their own research in bioelectrochemistry. Recently two such schools were organized by members of BES. Below is information from this schools.

Workshop in Ljubljana, Slovenia

The International workshop and postgraduate course on Electroporation based Technologies and Treatment supported by Bioelectrochemical Society took place from 19th to 22nd of November in Ljubljana. 71 participants form 10 different European countries (Belgium, France, Ireland, Romania, Croatia, Germany, Lithuania, Italy, Bulgaria, and Slovenia) participated there. Lectures were given by several known scientists working in the area of electroporation. Lluis M. Mir and Damijan Miklavčič were Co-Directors and lecturers of the course. With them were also lecturers Eberhard Neumann, Veronique Preat, Gregor Serša and Justin Teissie. Asistance lecturers were Tadej Kotnik, Igor Lacković and Maja Čemažar.

Course covered different aspects of electroporation. From the basic level of electroporation on lipid bilayers trough the cell electroporation in vivo and in vitro to the different type of tissue electroporation. Applications of electroporations such as genetransfection, transdermal drug delivery, electrochemotherapy of tumors were presented. The focus was also on what kind of parameters of electric field and shape of electrodes are recommended for efficient electroporation in each type of applications. In addition the imaging techniques were presented by Bruno Gabriel, Srdjan Novaković was presenting Current status of tumor vaccines, and E-Learning as a possible technological option for the next course was presented by Matevž Pustišek.

Special time gaps in the schedule were reserved for students' presentation. Students prepared one page abstract about their work on electroporation. That abstract were presented by 16 students from different countries. After course they got a certificate with the 15 ECS. Two social events were organized during the course. During the first day the get-together party took place at the Žabar. In Thursday participants have visited the Postojna cave.

The filling of the event can be examined in the picture gallery on the internet address: www.cliniporator.com/ect. Also it is available to download the proceedings of the course. The course was in part supported by IGEA s.l.r., Carpi (MO), Italy.

International Autumn School, Predeal, Romania

The International autumn school "Non-invasive biophysical methods and their application in medicine in Biology" (Predeal , Timisul de Sus, Gaiser Hotel), Romania, October 7–12, 2003) was organized by the Council member Dr. Eugenia Kovacs under auspices of Romanian Biophysical Society, IUPAB, International Society of Bioelectrochemistry and Romanian Cultural Institute. It benefited also by a grant obtained from Romanian Ministry for Education and Research as well as by some small sponsorships from several companies.

A special site (www.biophysics.ro) was created for school information display, registration and communication with participants (before, during and after the school). It was linked to the BES site which advertised the school in a very professional way, even before the school site was open. The school was characterized by a good scientific atmosphere, generated by an excellent team of lecturers who combined high level presentations with intensive discussion during poster presentations and tutorial meetings. Fourteen foreign speakers were invited to present the up to date developments in the field of biophysical methods used in medical and biological research (3 speakers from USA, 1 from Sweden, 6 from France, 2 from Germany, 1 from Hungary and 1 from Spain) and to discuss with students during the tutorials.

Direct, informal interaction with students (medical doctors, biophysicists, as well as physicists and chemists involved in biomedical research) was a special attraction for students as well for teachers.

The school setting – a pre-war home-like fully renovated villa, situated in a clearing within a fir-tree forest, stimulated scientific and social interaction of participants during forest walks, prolonged dinners or around a fire in a snowy mountain landscape. The main topics discussed were related to biotechnological and clinical applications of dielectrophoresis, electropermeabilization and electroporation, up to date optical methods of diagnosis and therapy (including photodynamic therapy and applications of optical tweezers), principles of the developing method of organ printing as well as more basic phenomena related to thermal motion and its role in "meeting" of key cell molecular compounds.

20 young participants from Lithuania, Russia, Hungary and Bulgaria together with 40 romanian student participants received from school organizers grants covering hotel and meals costs. Some of them received also travel grants.

Speakers agreed to let their presentations to be displayed on a special interacting site of the school page (www.biophysics.ro, password "geiseruser") in order to continue their interaction with the students as long as necessary.

Bioelectrochemical Society

By-Laws (2004)

1. The business address of The Bioelectrochemical Society (BES) is that of the Secretary General, from 2001 on:
Prof. Dr. Tibor Hianik, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Sciences, Comenius University, Mlynská dolina F1, 842 48 Bratislava, Slovak Republic
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2. The annual BES membership fees are:

Individual	40 €
Student	10 €
Corporate	550 €

3. The journal *Bioelectrochemistry* (formerly Bioelectrochemistry and Bioenergetics (BEB)) is the official journal of the Society. The subscription at a reduced price, is optional to the BES members. The reduced price for BES members is currently as follows:

Printed version:	52 €
Electronic version:	35 €
Printed + electronic versions:	87 €

4. The Society keeps national groups as corporate members. Presently, the French Group is a corporate member for 5 years.

5. Honorary Members: H. Berg, Jena (Vice-President, 1979 – 1993)
Yu.A. Chizmadzhev (Awarded by Giulio Milazzo Prize, 2003)

6. The BES general Assembly elects up to 15 Council Members for the period of 4 years, re-eligible for 4 years. The BES Council chooses the Executive Officers from its members:
President (elected for 4 years)
Secretary General (elected for 4 years)
Treasurer (elected for 4 years)
Deputy Treasurer (elected for 4 years)

7. Council Members:
M.A. De la Rosa, President (2003–07)
T. Hianik, Secretary General (2001–05)
L.M. Mir, Treasurer (2003–07)
J. Weaver, past President (2003–07)
J. Teissié, Deputy Treasurer (2003–07)
P.N. Barlett (2001–05)
R. Gilbert (2003–07)
R. Guidelli (2001–05)
E. Kovacs (2001–05)
J. Lipkowski (2003–07)
B.A. Melandri (2001–05)
E. Neumann (2003–07)
A.M. Oliveira Brett (2001–05)
D. Walz (2003–07)

8. The By-Laws can be changed by simple majority of the BES Council.

The actual information from The Bioelectrochemical Society can be found in BES web site: http://www.bes-online.usf.edu