

The 2nd European Biophysics Congress, an opportunity for European Biophysics.

More than twenty years ago, an European Biophysics Congress was held in Baden (Germany). Very few of us were present at this event which can be considered as the first attempt to organise the European biophysics community. Contrary to most of the other scientific areas which got organised at the same time at the European level, such an initiative was not continued. On the other hand, our colleagues from North-America, with a somewhat equivalent number of biophysicists, run successful yearly biophysics meetings with a constantly demonstrated attractiveness. Considering that our community really needs to meet regularly within our own continent, the European Biophysical Societies' Association (EBSA) decided to promote the organisation of a Biophysics Congress on a regular basis. The site of Orleans was chosen for the first event of this new series.

Since EBSA had no experience in the organisation of such a meeting and no funds to meet the major costs, it was decided that the best way to succeed was to ask to the National Biophysical Society of the host country to support its organisation, including its financial and legal aspects. The French Biophysical Society accepted this challenge with enthusiasm. We then progressed experimentally through its organisation. After having defined the topics for the nine sessions, an International Scientific Committee and a Programme Committee were designated. Due to the responsibility taken by the French Biophysical Society, it seemed fair to constitute these committees with scientists designated equally by EBSA and by the French Biophysical Society. Concerning the Programme Committee, groups of two specialists were designated in scientific relationship with each session. Their duties were to propose names for possible invited speakers, to act as Reviewers of the submitted abstracts to be published in the present issue of the European Biophysics Journal, and to select some of the submissions to be presented as short oral communications. The role of the International Scientific Committee was the selection of the invited speakers amongst those proposed by the Programme Committee, the designation of the opening and closing session speakers and of the plenary lecturers. Finally the Local Organising Committee, on whom the practical organisation rested, was composed of members of the Center for Molecular Biophysics of Orleans (CNRS).

One of our main guidelines has been to propose a congress with low registration and boarding fees in order to make it accessible to most of the European biophysics groups, including their young scientists. When writing this introduction, nearly 600 biophysicists coming from more than 25 countries have already registered. I am glad to see that, amongst them, colleagues from North and South America and Japan will also join us. Another interesting aspect of the congress is the organisation of a post-doctoral forum and of a forum devoted to biophysics teaching. Both activities intend to create opportunities for the development of networks, with the aim to increase the future potential of Biophysics in Europe..

The Orleans Congress is an opportunity for the European Biophysics Community. I am particularly confident in its success and in the fact that EBSA will be able to promote such regular meetings. There is no doubt that we will meet again in three years.

May I take this opportunity to welcome all the eminent colleagues who have willingly accepted to join us and to deliver their lectures, and all the scientists who have decided to participate in the meeting. I also wish to thank my colleagues from the French Biophysical Society who have accepted the financial risk, as well those from the Center for Molecular Biophysics of Orleans who have accepted to work so hard in order to transform the initial exciting idea into a concrete and successful reality.

Orleans, April 28, 1997
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