
FRONTIERS IN EUROPEAN BIOPHYSICS

In July 1997, during the European Biophysics Societies Association (EBSA) Congress in Orleans, the Council proposed that the 2000 congress should be in München (Germany) and in 2003 congress in Alicante (Spain). Thus, the Spanish Society of Biophysics was commissioned to organize the 4th EBSA Congress in July 5-9, 2003. The Organizing Committee has worked hard during the last two years to implement a Program that will bring together biophysicists covering the most important aspects that describe the Frontier in European Biophysics.

Frontiers in research are difficult to define. Creation of knowledge depends not only new methods and concepts, but also of the interaction with other fields of research. Biophysics not only represents a strong research area, full of innovative techniques, methods and concepts, but has also fertilized modern biology and medicine, giving a new opportunity for physics and mathematics in the creation of knowledge in the life sciences. It has been extremely difficult to fit in three densely packed days all the suggested contributions. Several meetings culminated in a Scientific Program, and the Local Organizing Committee pieced it together in a viable way. The extraordinary work and skills of Professors Angel Nadal and Cristina Ripoll has been instrumental in this respect. The final result represents not only a good description of the present state-of-the-art in European biophysics, but also new pathways giving rise to presentations and discussions from theoretical biophysics to emerging techniques, from lipid-protein interactions to structural biology, from the structure of nucleic acids, proteins and organelles to their function and applications, from single molecule biophysics, membrane dynamics and channels for ions and water, to bionanotechnology, bioengineering and molecular motors. A special symposium has been organized in honour of our colleague and friend Professor Peter Bayley to whom EBSA are indebted for his leadership and authoritative role for 13 years as Managing Editor of the European Biophysics Journal, the journal of EBSA.

This meeting also explores a more open and creative concept of Europe. The political, geographical and cultural concepts of Europe inspired the EBSA Executive Committee and the Organizing Committee in an effort to incorporate biophysicists from East European countries that have not participated so far in this extraordinary adventure. This effort is expected to continue in the next years. We are deeply committed to the idea that science will help to create the cultural and economical framework that our countries need. Supranational collaboration is a tradition in science and European biophysicists will not be the exception, but the example.

Despite a limited budget, every effort has been made to organize an outstanding scientific congress. Professors Esther Fuentes wrestled with all the difficult aspects associated with this seemingly endless project. Drs J. M. Rovira de Miguel and Israel Jarabo have been in charge of infrastructure and the social programme. All of them together with a large group of Assistants (Patricia Ruiz, Pilar Vaca, Pilar Sepulcre, Jonathan Jones, Jose A G Pertusa, Isabel Maestre and Maricarmen Viso) who have split their time between science and this Congress, have worked hard to be able to arrive at this moment. Dr Raquel Pomares and Miss Vegara have been working on the organization of the meeting and were very effective in coordinating the rest of the people. Professor Etelvina Andreu was the “wheel person” that from the Executive Secretary made everything possible.

The European Biophysics Societies Association (EBSA) elected me Vice-President in the year 2000. In the last 3 years I have been fortunate to work with the EBSA officers, Professors Heinz Rueterjans (President), Paul Vigny (Past President), László Matyus (Secretary), Michael Ferenczi (Treasurer), together with Lennart Nilsson, Giulano Colombetti, Anthony Watts and Jean-Marc Lhoste. I am indebted to all of them. During this Congress I will end my period as President of the Spanish Society of Biophysics. Profs Manolo Cortijo, Felix Goñi, Joan Subirana, Jose L Carrascosa, Sebastian Cerdan and a long list of friends worked to create a powerful scientific society. During all these years my only merit has been to work with excellent scientists and even best friends both in the EBSA Council and in the Council of the Spanish Society of Biophysics.

On behalf on the European Biophysics Societies Association and the Spanish Society of Biophysics I welcome you to Alicante. I am confident that this Congress will be as successful as the previous ones and will contribute to promote Biophysics in all parts of Europe.

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EDITORIAL THE EUROPEAN BIOPHYSICS JOURNAL AND THE EBSA 3RD EUROPEAN BIOPHYSICS CONGRESS, 2000

EBSA and EBJ

Since the adoption of the current title of the Journal in 1984, the European Biophysics Journal has had a close relationship with EBSA. As part of its contents, the Journal has included the EBSA Calendar of Events, detailing scientific activities of many of the Member Societies of the Association. Individual members of the Societies have been responsible for supporting the Journal by serving as members of the Editorial Board and the Advisory Editorial Board. In addition, members have frequently fulfilled the important role of expert reviewer of submitted manuscripts, as well as being the authors of original research papers. As Managing Editor, I wish to thank them all for this continued invaluable support and I personally look forward to our interactions and guidance in the future.

Ownership

A major change took place in 1996, when an agreement was implemented between EBSA and the publishers conferring joint ownership of the Journal, shared between EBSA and Springer. This arrangement has now brought a new degree of financial stability for the Journal and for EBSA, and a closer link and interest for members in the growth and development of the Journal.

Handling times for papers

The Oxford office is now averaging a time of 6–8 weeks between receipt of a paper and the first decision to an author about their paper for ~ 85 % of all submitted papers (as a matter of course, every paper is acknowledged upon receipt in the office). In addition, on receipt of corrected proofs by the publisher, the paper is published on the web (in On-Line First) within 10 days with a citable DoI (document identifier) number. Any further delays in publication are usually associated with seeking and receiving suitable reviewer comments, as well as authors' delays in revising papers in response to reviewers' comments.

Electronic submission

From May 15 2003, all material (papers, letters, reviews, techniques) can be submitted electronically, by logging on to <http://ebj.manuscriptcentral.com/>. Reviewing and editorial work will also be performed from here, and authors can track their papers directly. It is hoped that handling times will come down yet further and the reviewing process, which is currently a major hold-up, might be reduced significantly.

In addition, the Journal is pleased to support the Congress by the publication of this volume of Abstracts, each section of which has been reviewed by the conference organisers.

Journal development and submission numbers

The Editorial Board is making a special effort to increase the size of the Journal and its publishing frequency, by encouraging colleagues to submit their best work to the Journal in the form of EBJ Invited Reviews, original Research Articles, and as Biophysics Letters. The purpose of Biophysics Letters is to provide a means for the rapid publication of significant new findings and concepts in Biophysics, with accelerated publication available for work which is basically acceptable in the submitted form, and which meets the Journal's normal high standards of rigour and originality.

Over the last 18 months, we have seen a major growth in the number of submissions, more than doubling since October 2002 until now, with very significant numbers from the Pacific Rim and the Australian Biophysics Society, in particular. This upturn has resulted from, it is assumed, in the new interest in biophysics and the recent decisions to fund "interface" science at the boundaries of physics, biology and chemistry. In particular, we have seen a major influx of papers describing single molecule detection and bionanotechnology, areas we are pleased to support.

Our relationship with the publishers has continued to develop well and we continue to be very well supported by an efficient staff in maintaining EBJ as one of the many high profile scientific journals published by Springer.

In particular, EBSA and the EBJ Editors would like to thank Dieter Czeschlik, Sabine Schreck and Janina Sobolewski for their contribution, patience and highly responsible attitude towards the production of this abstract book to support this EBSA congress. The extra efforts by the organizing committee, Bernat Soria and all of his local team, especially Fina Vegara Meseguer (for working magic on all the abstracts which were too long), were much appreciated in bringing this final abstract book to all participants at a reasonable price and on time.

Personal subscriptions

Personal hard copy and electronic-only subscriptions were introduced in 2000, making it possible for individual members of the EBSA member societies to become subscribers for a very modest price. Full details can be obtained from the EBJ inside cover and EBSA Web pages (www.ebsa.org) and can be ordered directly from (www.ebsa.org/ebj/ebj_subs.html).

The EBSA 4th European Biophysics Congress

This congress reaffirms the growth in biophysics in Europe. On behalf of the Editorial Board of EBJ, I should like to thank Bernat Soria as chairman, and all those colleagues in Alicante whose efforts have been focussed on ensuring that this Congress runs successfully and smoothly, both as a scientific meeting of high quality, as well as a venue where long-lasting personal friendships can be strengthened in the common interests of a fascinating, productive and important field of scientific endeavour. We hope to see the relationship between EBSA and the Journal continue to develop to mutual benefit, in helping to promote the further development of Biophysics within a European and international context, and to establish the European Biophysics Community as a lively participant in the subject at the highest level.

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European Biophysics Journal:

<http://link.springer.de/link/service/journals/00249/index.htm>

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