



## NEWSLETTER

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.....FROM THE EFI PRESIDENT

## DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS,



I am pretty sure that all of you have been following the news about the severe Corona Virus outbreak (COVID-19) in China and other parts of the world and the relatively high number of deaths associated with this disease. For the time being Europe is quite safe and that gives us some time and hope that appropriate treatment options and vaccinations will be developed soon. We really feel sorry and sympathise with people in China who were struck by this pandemic and suffer the severe consequences of it. I am also pretty sure, that all HLA specialists in the world already thought of the implications of HLA in such an outbreak and the role that HLA may play in it. Susceptibility to COVID-19? Co-Responsibility for an effective or ineffective immunological response? Development of vaccines? Ineffectiveness of vaccination? There are so many parts in which our field could contribute – I think we are all aware of this and we are prepared and open for collaborations with colleagues

from other specialties. We look forward to first fascinating results which will allow us a better understanding of the processes involved and will show the way ahead.

Another subject that has dominated the news in the last weeks of 2019 until very recently (and which probably will continue to pick our brains in the following months) is the BREXIT chaos. I know that some of you cannot even stand seeing “BREXIT” being written down, however, there is no way of escape, in particular since our next annual EFI conference will be carried out in the United Kingdom. Space in the EFI Newsletters is too scarce to start elaborating and politicising on BREXIT, however, one thing should be said – we are happy that EFI stays united and that our BSHI colleagues along with the various EFI committees involved in the organisation of the 34<sup>th</sup> annual EFI meeting in Glasgow stayed united until the very end and were not affected by the negative discussions about BREXIT. I truly believe that in science there is no space for separation. If we want to move things forwards we need to keep cooperating closely, interact and exchange information aiming to learn from each other, and advance knowledge in order to eventually develop and offer state of the art treatment options for the patients we are serving. We owe this to the thousands of COVID-19 infected patients awaiting treatment and to the hundreds of thousands of waiting list patients in need of transplants.

As mentioned already above, this year’s EFI conference will be carried out in Glasgow. This will be the first annual EFI conference ever carried out in Scotland, and the third one to be carried

out in the UK (after Brighton in 1995 and Liverpool in 2012). I would really like to thank Ann-Margaret Little, David Turner and Helen McFarlane as well as their BSHI colleagues, along with the EFI Scientific and Education Committee members for putting together such an exciting scientific program which covers the areas of Transplantation, Immunotherapy, Regenerative Medicine, Autoimmunity, Reproduction Medicine and Cancer Therapy. We are proud that our society hosts such a prestigious event with many outstanding invited speakers accepting our invitation! Make sure not to miss the joint EFI-ESOT session. We have recently signed a Cooperation Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding with the European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT) (as we did in the past with other scientific societies) and I am convinced that this will be a great starting point and an opportunity for the two societies to strengthen their ties and initiate new cooperation projects.

Another highlight of this year’s EFI conference will be the Ceppellini lecture. This year’s awardee is Prof. Jacques Neefjes who is a Professor in the department of Cell and Chemical Biology in the University of Leiden/the Netherlands. His outstanding work has been focusing for years in the field of Immunology and his almost 300 scientific papers are cited in more than 30.000 publications. His main achievements were in the description of Antigen presentation by Class I and Class II MHC molecules as well as the intracellular mechanisms that are associated with these processes. Make sure to be there at the opening session, where apart from the Ceppellini award also the Julia Bodmer and the HLA awards will be granted!

## .....FROM THE EFI PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

By the time you will be keeping this EFI Newsletter's issue in your hands we will have completed this year's EFI elections. Indeed, we are about to have three new elected Councilors, as well as our new President! I hope that all members managed to give their vote on time. Since we introduced the electronic voting system participation in our elections went up and we expect also this year good partaking figures. At this point I would like to thank the three outgoing Councilors, Neema Mayor, Jean Villard, and Pierre-Antoine Gourraud for their excellent contribution in the EFI Executive Committee (EC) during the last three years! They brought much energy, spirit, new ideas, and were vastly involved in the various projects that were discussed and processed by the EC in their time as Councilors.

As time runs so quickly, I would also like to remind everyone, and in particular our young members, on the upcoming H&I International Summer School which this year will be organized by EFI

again and carried out in the beautiful city of Prague in the Czech Republic. The event is scheduled between the 30<sup>th</sup> of August and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September, and the main organizers are Tony Slavcev and David Turner. The program for this popular joint event between EFI and its sister societies ASHI, APHIA and ARSHI has been already set and soon you will be asked to submit your abstracts in order to qualify for participation. Please keep in mind that this event is limited to a maximum number of 50 participants, and provides a great opportunity to interact closely with young scientists from all over the world, as well as with the Faculty Members who always are highly esteemed and experienced members of the organizing H&I sister societies. Next year's ISS will then be carried out somewhere in the Middle East or North Africa and the Arabic Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (ARSHI) will be the hosting organization. Please also keep in mind that EFI always grants a limited number of bursaries for mem-

bers who wish to participate in the ISS and are willing to submit an abstract. Details will be announced soon via blast e-mail.

I would like to close by wishing all a successful time at the upcoming EFI conference in Glasgow. I hope, you will have safe travels to Scotland and will find the time to visit all the interesting sessions you wanted to attend, interact and intermingle with colleagues and scientists from all over the world, plan new co-operations and projects, and finally manage to enjoy the great Scottish hospitality, the food and drinks as well as the stunning Scottish landscapes and other important landmarks in and around Glasgow! I hope to see as many of you as possible in a couple of weeks' time at the 34<sup>th</sup> EFI meeting in Glasgow.

Joannis Mytilineos

EFI-President