



European Federation of  
Immunological Societies

## NewsFlash

October 2020

### EFIS President's Message

Dear friends and colleagues,

The autumn of 2020 is in many respects unusual. Instead of meeting in person and exchanging ideas in the course of conferences all over Europe, we are facing the second wave of COVID-19, a lot of uncertainty regarding planned events and in many cases the switch to virtual formats. On the other hand, this time puts an unprecedented focus on our favourite topic: immunology.

Never before has there been such a great interest in understanding immune responses, disease courses and vaccinations. Let us use this attention to make our scientific voices heard in the immunology community and beyond. We hope that this Newsflash can be part of the vehicle for promoting news from immunologists in Europe during these especially challenging times.

In this EFIS Newsflash we will provide updates on EFIS initiatives, including the **EFIS Task Forces on Vaccination, Diversity, Young Immunologists (yEFIS) and Education**, as well as detailing news from our Official Journals, the *European Journal of Immunology* and *Immunology Letters*, and from our partners **ACTERIA** and **BD Biosciences**. With less than a year to go, work is well underway towards organising the **European Congress of Immunology** in 2021, which you can find out more about in the ECI2021 news section below. Finally, please do let your voices be heard by sending us information to feature in our **"News from our member societies"** section of the Newsflash!

With best wishes,

Andreas Radbruch  
EFIS President

### EFIS Task Forces

#### Vaccination Task Force

Together with the EFIS Board, the EFIS Vaccination Task Force drafted and released a statement in response to a "Recommendation on Non-Animal-Derived Antibodies" published by the European Union (EU) Reference Laboratory for alternatives to animal testing (EURL ECVAM). The statement - that you can read [here](#) - was sent to EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and several other Commission officials. EFIS encourages its member societies to use this as a reference if and when reaching out to their national governments on the same issue.

For further information, contact the [Chair of the Vaccination Task Force](#).

#### Diversity Task Force

The EFIS Diversity Task Force was launched in late 2019 and aims to address the continued under-representation of minorities in immunology.

The newly established Task Force Team first met in Belgrade, Serbia in January 2020 to formulate its mission and projects and then held a zoom meeting in July, which led to the addition of two new male members to the Task Force Team from Ireland and Greece.

The EFIS Diversity Task Force Team is working towards a "news and views" article evaluating the on-going pandemic from the standpoint of European women scientists. Moreover, the special "Women in Immunology" session planned for ECI 2021 will be a joint effort of the EFIS Diversity Task Force. This session will be dedicated to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women immunologists,



with the contributions of renowned speakers. The Diversity Task Force also plans to provide **a grant and an award** for scientists who are a member of an EFIS affiliated society and belong to a minority group in less-privileged countries.



For further information, contact the **Chair of the Diversity Task Force**.

### yEFIS Task Force



The dedicated **yEFIS Task Force website** is now up and running! The website is full of information about their mission, members, registration, as well as the latest news involving the Task Force, and lots more.

The yEFIS Task Force has published a fantastic article featured in the September issue of the *European Journal of Immunology*: "Young EFIS - joining forces to support Early Career Researchers in Immunology". Click **here** to access the full article.

The Task Force has also recently launched yEFIS Interest Groups focused on specific topics of immunology, such as cancer immunology, mucosal immunology and autoimmunity. These smaller groups within yEFIS are great to provide closer interaction between our members working in the same field, promoting data exchange, networking or troubleshooting. Our members can share their recent publications or job offerings, establish collaborations or just network. Registration for yEFIS Interest Groups will be available soon through our registration form on **www.yefis.org**. If you're already part of the yEFIS network and want to join an Interest Group, please contact us through **yefis@efis.org** to include you.

### Education Task Force

Almost 2 years have passed since the March 2019 EFIS Strategic Retreat in Berlin, when the **Hellenic Society of Immunology** (HSI) introduced for the first time the idea of harmonising the teaching of immunology in medical schools across Europe. EFIS Societies applauded the initiative, thus laying the foundation for an EFIS Task Force on Education.

Since then, Prof. Hannes Stockinger and Dr. Alexandros Sarantopoulos, respectively on behalf of EFIS and HIS, have elaborated on issues contingent to the project's implementation across Europe. Thanks to their efforts the Task Force is now ready to be launched. In the coming months, the Task Force will focus on integrating prerequisites into a preliminary project proposal, which will then be addressed to National Societies.

Moreover, the EFIS Board has recently promoted introducing a second public outreach initiative, namely the publication of a book on notions of immunology oriented towards adolescent readers.

The multitask Task Force is jointly chaired by A. Sarantopoulos managing the harmonisation of quality immunology teaching and EFIS Secretary General Pablo Engel overseeing outreach activities.

For further information, contact **Alexandros Sarantopoulos** or **Pablo Engel**.

## EFIS Partner News

### The EFIS- BD Biosciences Partnership – Of immunologists, by immunologists, for immunology

On the 27th of September 2019, an agreement of partnership was signed between EFIS and BD Biosciences, to share knowledge and experience with the aim of benefitting the immunology community throughout Europe. Read more **here**.



### EFIS on TOUR at the XIV Annual Meeting of the Catalan Society of Immunology.

The EFIS Board will be joining the Catalan Society of Immunology for its XIV Annual meeting this coming November 19-20, 2020 for still another EFIS on TOUR Symposium sponsored by BD Biosciences. The preliminary programme can be downloaded **here**.

Participation in the two-day remote meeting will be limited. However, videos of the **Keynote Speakers** will be available for viewing in the weeks after the event.

## ECI 2021

### ECI 2021 – One year to go!

We are honoured and extremely excited to have two Nobel Prize Laureates, Professor

Sir Peter J. Ratcliffe and Professor Jules Hoffmann, joining the congress as keynote lecturers to inspire all of us in the immunology community.

The main scientific programme, to be announced in November 2020, will include special COVID-19 sessions, featuring well known scientists to cover different aspects of the pandemic, several guest society symposia, as well as different satellite meetings in related fields. Moreover, for the first time at an ECI, there will be a special session dedicated to Young immunologists organised solely by the yEFIS Task Force.



Registration will begin in January 2021 when the abstract submission system will also open.

We will also soon be launching our social media campaign to draw attention to the stimulating scientific programme and urge all EFIS members to follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and of course our [website](#), for updates!

***Important: in the meantime, we'd like to invite your feedback: while we're moving forward with the planning of a live meeting (that we're all craving!), we'd appreciate learning if you would – conditions permitting – attend a face-to-face ECI 2021 or whether you would prefer a virtual congress. Click [here](#) and send us your input!***

## Upcoming Deadlines

In addition to the November 7, 2020 deadline for applications for [EFIS-EJI Meeting Support](#) and [EFIS-IL Short-term Fellowships](#), EFIS is accepting proposals for

- the [EFIS Eastern Star Award](#) (deadline 31.12.2020)



and

- the [ACTERIA Early Career Research Prizes](#) awarded by EFIS (deadline 31.12.2020)



## News from EFIS Journals

Professor James Di Santo, Chair of the Executive Committee of the [European Journal of Immunology](#) (EJI), is pleased to welcome [Muzlifah Haniffa](#) (Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK) as an Executive Committee member. Executive Committee members are the equivalent of Editors and oversee the peer review at the Journal. The full list of members can be seen [here](#).



Also, EJI and [yEFIS](#) are happy to announce a webinar for early career researchers (PhD students and postdocs) featuring tips and tricks of scientific writing. Join us on **30 November at 17:00 CET** to attend our workshop "How to get published: Workflows and writing tips". More information about this event will soon be released via [yEFIS](#).

We have also updated [SARS-CoV2 policies](#).

Some recent noteworthy papers in EJI include:

- **Expansion of plasmablasts and loss of memory B cells in peripheral blood from COVID-19 patients with pneumonia**  
De Biasi S, Lo Tartaro D, Meschiari M, Gibellini L, Bellinazzi C, Borella R, Fidanza L, Mattioli M, Paolini A, Gozzi L, Jaacoub D, Faltoni M, Volpi S, Milić J, Sita M, Sarti M, Pucillo C, Girardis M, Guaraldi G, Mussini C, Cossarizza A.
- **Immune response in children with COVID-19 is characterized by lower levels of T-cell activation than infected adults**  
Moratto D, Giacomelli M, Chiarini M, Savarè L, Sacconi B, Motta M, Timpano S, Poli P, Paghera S, Imberti L, Cannizzo S, Quiros-Roldan E, Marchetti G, Badolato R.
- **Convalescent plasma treatment for COVID-19: Tempering expectations with the influenza experience**  
Subbarao K, Mordant F, Rudraraju R.



[Immunology Letters](#) provides a vehicle for the speedy publication of experimental papers, (mini)Reviews and Letters to the Editor addressing all aspects of molecular and cellular immunology.

The 2019 impact factor of *Immunology Letters* is **3.276**, a more than 28% increase over its 2018 IF.

*Immunology Letters* want to share with you their most cited and most downloaded articles thus far in 2020: click [here](#) for details.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, carrying on researching and publishing is difficult. In order to assist with continuing regular publishing activities as far as possible, Elsevier offers a **repository of resources** that the research community may find helpful.

## News from our Member Societies

Follow the links below to download announcements and news received from EFIS National Societies.

The **British Society for Immunology** announces its upcoming virtual meeting **Connecting Immunology in the Time of COVID-19**, a new expert briefing note on COVID-19 immunology and the launch of the **UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium**. Read more [here](#).



The **Dutch Society for Immunology** (NVvI) launches an excellent idea, beginning with the opening of their 2020 virtual Annual Meeting to all members of EFIS-affiliated immunology societies for a reduced registration fee. Details follow [here](#).

The **German Society for Immunology** (DGfI) congratulates the most recent recipient of the German Immunology Award, announces early thesis and career prizes, and reviews the recent virtual seminar of its Young Immunologists Forum. Read all about it [here](#).



News from Belgrade is saddening, as the **Immunological Society of Serbia** (ISoS) announces the passing at the age of 96 of the founder of immunology in Serbia, Miroslav Mirko Simić. Read his tribute [here](#).



The **Romanian Society of Immunology** (SIR) is pleased to share its account of the successful organisation - despite the COVID-19 pandemic - of its on-site and online 49th Annual Conference, in collaboration with the Romanian Association of Immuno-dermatology, from September 30th to October 3rd, 2020. The review is available [here](#).

## Feedback?

Is there something that you would like to see featured in the EFIS NewsFlash? If so, get in touch with us at [office@efis.org](mailto:office@efis.org) and we will try to include it in a future release.

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