



FEBS Education Workshops

Debrecen and Belgrade 2014

Two FEBS Education workshops aimed at improving teaching and learning in the molecular life sciences and also including some tips and skills for early-career researchers were held in central Europe in the second half of 2014: one in Debrecen, Hungary and one in Belgrade, Serbia.

The **Debrecen workshop** (24–25 August 2014), jointly organized by the Hungarian Biochemical Society (HBS) and FEBS Education Committee, was held as an annex to the annual conference of the HBS, at Debrecen University. It attracted around 60 participants at all career stages and with representatives from several Hungarian universities. The local coordinator was Prof. László Dux, and the workshop trainers were from the FEBS Education Committee (Gül Güner Akdoğan) and FEBS Working Group on Integration (WGI; Mathias Sprinzl) as well as from Hungary (Anikó Görbe, Margit Keresztes and Tamás Csont). There was also support from FEBS Executive Committee members from the HBS: Beáta Vértessy and László Fésüs.

The main topics treated in the workshop were problem-based learning (PBL), skills and key knowledge expected from a graduate in molecular life sciences, designing laboratory practicals, how to write a scientific paper, and research in undergraduate education. The workshop facilitated discussion from different viewpoints, such as on the philosophy and methodology of PBL (G. Güner Akdoğan, A. Görbe and M. Keresztes), and the sharing of different practices, such as for the varied approaches to undergraduate research work at different universities (T. Csont, Szeged; Mihály Kovács, Budapest; Ferenc Erdődi, Debrecen; Ferenc Gallyas, Pécs; G. Güner Akdoğan, Izmir). As a whole, the workshop sessions were highly interactive, with participation both from the faculty and young scientists. For example, skills and key knowledge expected from a graduate in molecular life sciences were first discussed in

small groups with a facilitator, and then group reports were presented to all participants, provoking lively discussions. Small-group work in the PBL session is pictured above.

The **Belgrade workshop** (18–19 September 2014), held at the Faculty of Chemistry, University of Belgrade, was hosted by the Serbian Biochemistry Society (SBS). The local coordinator was Prof. Marija Gavrovic-Jankulovic, and FEBS Education Committee was represented by Keith Elliott and G. Güner Akdoğan, with support from M. Sprinzl (FEBS WGI). Around 60 participants attended from all over Serbia; about a third were professors and two-thirds postgraduate students and post-docs.

The workshop started with a general discussion on molecular life science issues in Serbia, moderated by Prof. Mihajlo Spasic (SBS President), and then moved to several education themes also covered in the Debrecen workshop. The project looking at skills and key knowledge expected from a molecular life sciences graduate was again tackled via the small-group format. Later in the workshop, a talk on ‘Molecular life sciences for the needs of industry’ (M. Sprinzl) attracted the interest of many faculty members as well as young scientists. A second theme was ‘designing laboratory practicals’. After an introduction (K. Elliott) and talk on ‘special study modules’ for medical undergraduate students (G. Güner Akdoğan), small-group work on ‘dry practicals’, ‘in silico practicals’, and ‘wet practicals’ allowed the participants to compare different approaches. Tips for early-career researchers were also incorporated into the program. As in Debrecen, M. Sprinzl gave a vivid description of how to write a scientific article, which was followed by lively discussion; in addition, K. Elliott gave a superb presentation on CV writing.

*Gül Güner Akdoğan
Chair, FEBS Education Committee*

Further details and photos from these workshops can be found on the [FEBS Education Platform](#).