First of all, I would like to wish you all - and our federation - a very successful, prosperous and Happy New Year!

Elsewhere in this issue our secretary, Ieke Schreuder, reports from the EFI committee meetings held in Vienna 8.-9. November last year. You should set aside a few minutes to read her report since it gives a very concise summary of the extensive work carried out by the many EFI committees. Let me just emphasize a few points:

1. **Committee coordination.** Each fall the chairmen of all EFI committees meet to inform each other of ongoing activities, to keep the work of the committees coordinated. This was an important part of the Vienna meetings. Some of the issues discussed are mentioned in Ieke’s report. Let me just add how immensely impressed I am about the work in our committees, and the efforts, imagination and visions of each of their members. Their contributions are instrumental for the quality of our work, both in clinical service and research (the former rests on the latter). And to add to that: Every one of them is doing their work for free. Their names can be found on our website (Committees). Let me here, on behalf of all of us, thank them for their important contributions.

2. **Official recognition of EFI’s accreditation programs.** Following the contract we signed with the Swedish Board for Accreditation (SWEDAC) in September last year, implying that in Sweden official recognition of histocompatibility laboratories will be based on EFI’s assessments, we have worked hard to obtain similar agreements with other national accreditation organisations. As a starter, the chairman of our accreditation committee, Antonio Nunez-Roldan, our committees “liaison officer”, Paul Reekers and I had a meeting with representatives of the organization European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) in October. As reported by Ieke the outcome of this meeting was very successful. We hope to finish our negotiations with EA in due time to seek approval by the next General Assembly of EFI (in Sofia in May). A Memorandum of Understanding with EA, together with the contract we already have with SWEDAC, will form an important template for the next step; i.e. negotiations with other national accreditation organisations in Europe. Here we have to work closely with the national societies of immunogenetics and histocompatibility. The goal is obvious: To reach official recognition of EFI’s accreditation programs (long overdue), with the hope that this may also lead to financial support for our work from governmental sources.

3. **First International Summer School of Immunogenetics:** Sevilla, Spain 12.-16. September, 2004. If you are a postgraduate student: Don’t miss this opportunity to get updated in modern immunogenetics, in interactive sessions with an international faculty! See more information in the last issue of our Newsletter or on the EFI website.

4. **Future EFI Congresses.**
   - The 18. EFI Congress, in Sofia 8.-11. May, is quickly approaching, under the very active leadership of Elisaveta Naumova, chairperson of the LOC, and Frans Claas, chairman of our Scientific committee. It will be a great event, both scientifically and socially. More information is available on their website: www.efi2004.bg/
   - The 19. EFI Congress will be held in Istanbul 23.-26. April, 2005. Mahmut Carin chairs the LOC, who will see to it that we shall enjoy both cutting edge immunogenetics and beautiful Istanbul.
   - The 20. EFI Congress will take place in Oslo 8.-11. June, 2006. I shall do my very best to chair the LOC so that also this congress hopefully meets with the high standards set by the former.

We have had a very kind offer from Jordi Vives to host the 21. EFI Congress in Barcelona in 2007, and from Mogens Thomsen, together with Anne Cambon-Thomsen, to host the 22. EFI Congress in Toulouse in 2008.

As you will see, EFI enters 2004 more vividly than ever. This is due to the hard work and enthusiastic contributions from a vast number of EFI officers, councillors and committee members. Let me again thank them all. It is an easy task for me to chair this family.

Erik Thorsby
February 2004
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www.tissue-typing.com
Dear EFI members,

This Newsletter is mainly focussing on the upcoming EFI meeting in Sofia. An update of the plenary program is given by the local organiser, Elissaveta Naumova. Next to these plenary sessions, the abstract sessions promise to be very interesting as well. At the moment the scientific committee is busy with scoring the more than 300 abstracts that have been submitted to the meeting.

Although the scientific program is a good reason to attend the meeting, there are also other (social) reasons to come to the beautiful city of Sofia. Another way to show your interest in EFI is by submitting your vote for the elections of new councillors. It is nice to see that so many candidates are willing to serve on the board of EFI. I wish you all a lot of wisdom in the selection of the best one(s).

A reminder for candidates, who would like to apply for the Julia Bodmer young scientist award: the deadline for submission of their application is February 15.

Finally I would like to ask your attention for the announcements of the international summer school on Immunogenetics in Sevilla, which EFI is organising together with its sister societies ASHI and ASEATT.

I am looking forward to see you all in Sofia.

Frans Claas

Copy date for EFI Newsletter no. 43 is March 15, 2004. Please send your contribution to Frans Claas, Leiden, the Netherlands, preferentially by e-mail: fhjclaas@lumc.nl

 Любимый Announcenent to EFI Members

For security reasons we need to change the username password for the EFI website on a regular basis. Changes to the password will be announced in the EFI Newsletter and will apply from the publication date of the Newsletter in which the change is announced.

The new username and password from July 2003 are:

Username: efimember
Password: Sofia
URL: http://www.efiweb.org/members/

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REPORT FROM THE EFI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING, VIENNA, NOVEMBER 9, 2003

Ike Schreuder, EFI Secretary

On November 8 and 9 a number of EFI committee meetings were organised in Vienna, Austria. The Accreditation Com-

mittee meeting was held on Saturday. The chairman of the EFI committees met to discuss activities that concern several committees. This coordination meeting is held annually, organised by the EFI secretary and chaired by the EFI president. Moreover a working group for financial support from European Union research programs discussed future plans. Many of the important items were reported to, and discussed by the EFI Executive Committee that met on Sunday. The report of this meet-
ing you will find below.

**Julia Bodmer Young Scientists Award**

As a tribute to Julia Bodmer, the late EFI president, who through her enthusiasm and knowledge encouraged many researchers in the field of immunogenetics, an EFI award is available to recognize the work of a young scientist in the field.

The award is associated with an oral presentation in a plenary session at the EFI meeting in Sofia while the receipt of锦将 receive free registration to the meeting and a grant of 1000 Euro to cover travel and lodging expenses. Candidates should be EFI members under the age of 35. Applicants should submit a CV, including a list of publications and a letter of support from the head of their department. Applications must be sent before February 15, 2004, to the chairman of the scientific committee of the next EFI conference:

Prof. dr. Frans Claas
Leiden University Medical Center
Dept Immunohematology and Blood Transfusion
P.O. Box 9600, 2300 RC Leiden, the Netherlands.
e-mail: fhjclaas@lumc.nl

recognised and accepted by Swedish authorities.

**Negotiations with European co-operation for Accreditation (EA)**

National accreditation institutions in Europe have formed a co-operative organization: the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA). Erik Thorsby reported about the annual meeting of the EA Laboratory Committee in Oslo in September this year, where he and Paul Reekers presented EFI and the EFI accreditation system. The presentation was well received and led to the establishment of an ad hoc committee of EA and EFI representatives to see whether better collaboration between EA and EFI could be established. Antonio Nunez-Roldan, Paul Reekers and Erik Thorsby met with the chairman of the EA Laboratory committee, Hanspeter Ischi and Andreas Steinhorst (EA and the German accreditation institution DACH) in Frankfurt on 30th October. An agreement was reached that EA and EFI should co-operate on the basis of mutual respect and with the aim of promoting competence and quality assessment in histocompatibility and immunogenetics in Europe. It was agreed that the accreditation documents of EFI should serve as technical sector specific documents to be approved and used by EA accreditation bodies (i.e. national accreditation institutions). It was also agreed that the assessments (inspections) should be a joint process. Two possibilities were outlined; (1) EFI inspectors also trained to perform general ISO assessments may be engaged to assess both accreditation criteria, or (2) there would be two sets of inspectors, one being EFI inspectors and another taking care of the general ISO standards, but carrying out the assessment/inspection jointly. It was also agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding should be worked out as the basis for future co-operation.

These agreements with SWEDAC and EA are necessary. The main reasons are: (1) accreditation with respect to general ISO standards is required by more and more European countries; (2) it would facilitate the accreditation procedures if the assessments with
respects to the ISO standards and the EFI assessment could be a joint process and (3) this may lead to full official recognition of our the accreditation program of EFI.

The results of the negotiations with SWEDAC and EA were fully approved by the Executive Committee. As is apparent there are no major discrepancies between the SWEDAC agreement and the provisional results of the negotiations with EA. An ad hoc committee was formed consisting of Antonio-Nunez Roldan (chairman of the accreditation committee), Jean-Marie Tiercy (chairman of the standards and quality assurance committee), Paul Reekers (committee liaison officer) and Erik Thorsby (President) to continue the negotiations with EA. From the standpoint of EFI the goal will be full acceptance and recognition of its accreditation procedures, which EA will then recommend to be used for assessment of all immunogenetics and histocompatibility laboratories by the national accreditation institutions in Europe. In the meantime representatives of national societies have been informed about the above-mentioned developments.

- Report of the coordination meeting November 8, 2003

Many of the items discussed there related to the EA and SWEDAC agreements, as reported above.

Standards: The version 5.3 will be effective as per 01/01/04 and is available on the EFI web site. Revisions for the DNA section will be presented at the Sofia meeting next year. Following the recent changes in HLA Nomenclature it was felt appropriate to reconvene the ad hoc EFI Nomenclature Committee which previously published the “Guidelines for nomenclature usage in HLA reports” (Tiercy et al, Eur J Immunogen 29, 273-4, 2002) to review these guidelines in light of these changes.

Accreditation: Presently 161 labs are accredited, with more to come, also outside Europe. The training of inspectors will be intensified; attending training courses will become mandatory. Such courses will be organised annually. Inspectors have to attend no less than 1 course every second year, and must perform at least one inspection per year.

External proficiency testing (EPT): There is a lack of proficiency testing programs, especially for antibody screening and cross matching techniques. Local programs are not available and professional programs are costly. The EPT together with the accreditation committee were asked to come forward with acceptable solutions. EPT programs are for example offered by NEQAS. Marcel Tilanus reported the plans for a high-resolution EPT program, an initiative by Elia van den Berg, Frans Claas and himself, originally developed for the BENELUX, and now offered to European laboratories. The outline has been published in the previous EFI newsletter Education: Restructuring of the committee is now effective. A program for the teaching sessions in Sofia has been prepared. Web: The site receives around 2000 visits per month; there is always a peak of activity preceding the annual meeting. The meetings and accreditation pages seem to be the most popular on the site.

- Summer school 2004

A five-day course will be organised in Sevilla, Spain on 12-16 September 2004. It is meant for 30 postgraduate fellows and 10 faculty members. It will cover immunogenetics at its widest sense. The course is a joint activity of EFI, ASHI and ASEATTA. The organising committee for this course is chaired by Frans Claas with Antonio Nunez-Roldan as local organiser. The course was announced in the previous EFI Newsletter.

- Advanced CPD approval from the Royal College of Pathologists.

EFI has applied for extension of advanced CPD approval, which is needed for accreditation in the UK. In the meantime this advanced CPD approval has been granted for a further three years, until 31 December 2006. This authorises organisers to award credits for attendance at EFI approved courses and conferences.

- Budget for 2003 and 2004

Education bursaries for 2004: The education committee received 6 applications of which 4 have been granted (2 out of 4 from Thessaloniki, 1 from Maastricht and 1 from Belgrade). The benefits for EFI from the Baden-Baden conference will be quite large, for which the Executive Committee was very grateful to the local organisers Ralf Wassmuth and Gregor Bein.

- Working group for financial support from European Union research programs

Mogens Thomsen reported about a meeting of this working group the day before. The working group consists of Mogens Thomsen, Andrzei Lange, liias Doxiadis, Gottfried Fischer and Steven Marsh. In the 6th framework package (6FP) the two new instruments, network of excellence and integrated projects, are not suited for EFI as they are very much oriented towards specific scientific projects. But the instruments from the 5FP are still active. An expression of interest in the area “science and society” has been submitted by the working group in June 2003, and the analysis of all submitted projects in the area (#283) has been published on the European Commission website in October 2003 http://eoi.cordis.lu/search_form.cfm. The working group will now prepare some proposals to be ready in advance of any new calls by the Commission.

- Future conferences

Elisavetta Naumova reported to the EC about the progress of the organisation for the 18th EFI conference in Sofia, Bulgaria. All information about the conference can be found at www.efi2004.bg, including registration, and abstract submission. The conference will be May 8-11, 2004. The 19th EFI conference is planned for April 23-26, 2005 in Istanbul and the local organiser Mahmut Carin is already very busy with the organisation. The 20th EFI conference will be in Oslo and will be organised by Erik Thorsby and colleagues June 8-11, 2006. The Executive Committee was very grateful to receive offers from Jordi Vives, for a conference in Barcelona in 2007 and from Mogens Thomsen, together with Anne Cambon-Thomsen for Toulouse for 2008.
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THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL
SUMMERSCHOOL ON IMMUNOGENETICS

EFI, together with the other international societies for histocompatibility and immunogenetics ASHI and ASEATTA, will organize in 2004 an international summer school on Immunogenetics. Aim of the summer school is to promote the field by an intensive interaction between participants and tutors. Introductory lectures will be followed by discussions on recent developments and presentation of own research.

Location: Albergue Juvenil de Sevilla. Sevilla Spain.
Faculty: Steve Mack (ASHI), Charley Orosz (ASHI), Frank Christiansen (ASEATTA), Jim McCluskey (ASEATTA), Erik Thorsby (EFI), Ronald Bontrop (EFI), Federico Garrido (EFI) and Frans Claas (EFI).
Topics include:
Immunogenetics of HLA and non-HLA genes.
Evolution of MHC and the immune response.
Population genetics.
NK cells and KIR genes.
Autoimmunity.
Host pathogen response.
Transplantation immunology.
HLA and cancer.

Students: maximally 25-30 postgraduate fellows.
Sponsoring: ASHI, ASEATTA and EFI (+ others)
Application: must include:
a) c.v.
b) motivation
c) letter of recommendation
d) summary research project

A small committee consisting of EFI, ASHI and ASEATTA delegates will consider the applications and will select the candidates if the number of applications is more than 30.

Registration fee: 150 euro including lodgement and meals.
Bursaries: participants are supposed to pay their own trip but the organizers will try to make a few bursaries available for a selective group of participants who present a good motivation why they can not pay their trip.

Applications must be sent before March 1, 2004 to:
Frans Claas
Leiden University Medical Center
Dept Immunohaematology and Blood Transfusion
P.O. Box 9600, 2300 RC Leiden The Netherlands.
e-mail: fhjclaas@lumc.nl

Information on acceptance will be sent to the candidates on March 20, 2004.

Frans Claas
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18th European Immunogenetics and Histocompatibility Conference
May 8 - 11, 2004, Sofia, Bulgaria

Important Information
The EFI 2004 annual conference is designed for clinical and basic scientists, physicians, fellows, graduate students and senior technologists interested in the theory and practice of immunogenetics and histocompatibility.

Scientific Program
This year's scientific program has been made with the idea to broaden the field of immunogenetics. With regard to this we have structured the program to focus on the new aspects of antigen-presentation, immunobiological synapses, as well as other new genes than MHC involved in the immunopathology of disease. In addition, new aspects of the immunotherapy of cancer as well as of immunity and aging are included in the program.
As in years past, there are four abstract sessions. The best abstracts submitted will be chosen for presentation in the best abstract session. Now for this year is a session dedicated for poster presentation. Eminent scientists will assess all posters on the basis of presentation, quality of content, contribution to the field of immunogenetics and histocompatibility. The best posters will be awarded. Again this year the teaching sessions are an integral part of the program. Now for this year also is the satellite symposium “Immunogenetics of melanoma cell lines”. This symposium is designed to review the data collected within ESTSAB and COSTER EU projects. By attending these meetings the participants can gain an understanding of the current trends in the theory and the practice of immunogenetics and histocompatibility and something more.

Conference Venue
The conference will take place from 8th to 11th May 2004 at the Kompanski Hotel Zografski located 12 km from the Sofia Airport and 20 min walking distance from the city centre. Kompanski Hotel Zografski is a beautiful deluxe complex situated in the lovely residential area of Lozenets with a great view to the Vitosha Mountain and the city. Beside the excellent conference facilities the Kompanski Hotel Zografski offers a complete holiday experience.

Exhibition
The commercial exhibition will be held at the Conference Venue throughout the entire conference. Its purpose is to complement the scientific sessions giving the participants the opportunity to become aware of the latest developments in products and technologies in the field of immunogenetics and histocompatibility.

CME Accreditation
In addition to the Certificate of Participation from the Local Organizing Committee of the EFI 2004 Conference, a Certificate of Participation will also be available from the Bulgarian Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education which is fully accredited by the Union of the European Medical Societies.

Registration and Information Desk
Registration and Information desk will be located at the main entrance of the Conference area at the Kompanski Hotel Zografski and will be opened as follows: Friday, May 7 12.00 - 19.00 Saturday, May 8 08.00 - 19.00 Sunday, May 9 08.00 - 19.00 Monday, May 10 08.00 - 19.00 Tuesday, May 11 08.00 - 14.00
Registration fee for the registered participants includes: admission to all sessions, entrance to Commercial Exhibition, the printed materials of the conference, 2 lunches, Welcome Reception, reduced 25% for the EFI Dinner.

Further Information
All information about the final program, the social events, the tours, and registration and accommodation can be viewed at the Conference website: www.efi2004.bg Information on the Jules Boder Young Scientist Award and the EFI bursaries is available at the EFI website: www.efi2004.bg

Important dates
Early registration by March 15, 2004
Please, register online at: www.efi2004.bg
Accommodation is strongly recommended by April 1, 2004 in order to benefit from the special room rates for the conference. Make your reservation by visiting: www.efi2004.bg
Do not contact the hotels directly.

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Preliminary program
18th European Immunogenetics and Histocompatibility Conference
May 8-11, 2004, Sofia, Bulgaria

Friday, May 7, 2004
12:00-19:00 Registration
9:00-17:00 Accreditation Inspectors workshop
17:30-20:30 Accreditation Commission meeting I

Saturday, May 8, 2004
8:00-19:00 Registration
8:00-14:00 Exhibits move in / Poster mounting
9:00-11:00 EHF Board meeting
11:00-13:00 Standards and Quality Assurance Committee meeting
10:00-13:00 Accreditation Commission meeting II
14:30-16:30 Opening Ceremony
Cappelline Lecture
Julia Bodmer Young Scientist Award
14:30-17:00 Coffee Break / Opening of the Exhibition
17:00-18:30 Plenary session II: Immunogenetics
Evolution of the MHC in human and non-human primates.
Ronald Boonstra (Bijwijk, The Netherlands)
Immunogenetic factors in HIV infection
Frank Christiansen (Perth, Australia)
HLA Haplotype and recognition of alloepitopes on HLA molecules
Ron Dausman (Pittsburgh, USA)
19:00-21:00 Welcome Reception

Sunday, May 9, 2004
8:00-19:00 Registration
8:30-10:00 Plenary session III: NK cells
NK differentiation and anti-tumor response
Michael Psammanich (Athens, Greece)
Immunomodulation of the maternal immune response during pregnancy
Ofer Mandelboim (Jerusalem, Israel)
NK cells and their interaction with dendritic cells
Lorenzo Brotto (Genova, Italy)
10:00-10:30 Reports of the ABOs
James McCleary (Melbourne, Australia)
10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
11:00-12:30 Abstract Session I
11:00-12:30 Teaching Session I: Statiscal and Methodological Aspects of survival analysis
12:30-14:00 Lunch
12:30-14:00 Weiss Committee Meeting
14:00-15:30 Abstract Session II
14:00-15:30 Teaching Session II: Polymorphisms different from HLA
15:30-16:00 Coffee Break
16:00-17:30 Best Abstracts
17:30-18:00 Coffee Break

Monday, May 10, 2004
8:00-19:00 Registration
8:30-10:00 Plenary session IV: The role of dendritic cells
Dendritic cells and the immune response
Geert De Koster (Nijmegen, the Netherlands)
Regulation of dendritic cell function
Carreno Ren e Simons (London, UK)
Tolerogenic properties of dendritic cells
Karien Mankoe (Mainz, Germany)
10:00-10:30 Special lecture: Ethical aspects of banking
Anne Comton-Thomson (Toulouse, France)
10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
11:00-12:30 Abstract Session III
11:00-12:30 Teaching Session III: Kidney allocation throughout Europe
12:30-14:00 Lunch
12:30-14:00 Education Committee Meeting
14:00-15:30 Abstract Session IV
14:00-15:30 Teaching Session IV: Stem cell allocation throughout Europe
15:30-17:00 EHF General Assembly
17:00-19:00 Poster session + wine
20:00 EHF dinner dance

Tuesday, May 11, 2004
8:00-14:00 Registration
9:00-10:30 Abstract Session V
9:00-10:30 Satellite symposium: "Immunogenetics of melanoma cell lines"
10:30-11:00 Coffee Break
11:00-13:00 Plenary session V: New (and old) targets for immunotherapy of cancer: pros and cons
Kees Mekel (Utrecht, the Netherlands)
Immunity and aging
Graham Parmalee (Tubingen, Germany)
Application of TNG for removal of HLA alleles in sensitized patients
Dolly Tan (Los Angeles, USA)
New aspects of clinical stem cell transplantation
Yisrael Shaked (Jerusalem, Israel)
13:00-13:30 Closure ceremony including presentation of the venue of EHF 2006
13:30-18:00 Exhibits move out / Poster removal
The First International Election of New Members of the EFI Executive Committee 2004

Nominations were sought for new secretary, new deputy treasurer and two new councillors.

We received one nomination only for secretary; Marcel Tilanus, and one nomination only for deputy treasurer; Anne Parissiadis. If the General Assembly during the 18th European Immunogenetics and Histocompatibility Conference in Sofia approves of these nominations, they will take office after the General Assembly.

We received six nominations for the two vacant positions as councillor: Antonio Arnaiz-Villena, Mats Bengtsson, Mahmut Carin, Christian Seidl, Jean-Marie Tieryc, and Ralf Wassmuth. Of these candidates Ralf Wassmuth has served as councillor before, but is according to the EFI constitutions, eligible as councillor for a second term. Since Marcel Tilanus is presently a councillor, and if his nomination as secretary is approved by the General Assembly in Sofia, we will have an additional vacant position as councillor after the General Assembly in Sofia.

I thus ask you to vote for three new councillors. If this is approved by the General Assembly no new nominations and voting for the additional vacant position as councillor (after Marcel Tilanus) will be necessary.

If you are paid-up EFI member you should use your rights to vote. So please, fill in the ballot form, which is enclosed with this Newsletter, and send it to our secretary Leke Schreuder as soon as possible, following the instructions as indicated. To assist you with your decision, a short presentation of all candidates is included in this Newsletter.

Erik Thorsby
President

Anne Parissiadis, Strasbourg, France – Nomination for EFI Deputy Treasurer
I was born in 1960 in Montpellier, France. I studied medicine in Dijon and then specialised in Medical Biology at the University of Strasbourg. I was awarded a degree for practicing medical biology in 1990 after defending a thesis on complement.

In 1993, I served as assistant in immuno-haematology at the Blood Centre in Strasbourg and I obtained a diploma for blood transfusion (Paris VI). Since 1994 I have been working in the Laboratory of Histocompatibility in Strasbourg which was EFI accredited the same year. I was initially Dr. Tongio’s assistant and since 1997 I have been deputy director of the laboratory. In 2000, I obtained a DEA degree in organ transplantation and cell therapy. My work as deputy director is to supervise the immunological follow-up of patients in organ transplantation and to supervise the search and typing for bone marrow transplantations so as to identify the most suitable donors.

I helped Dr. Tongio to organise the last two meetings of EFI in Strasbourg and I have participated in training programmes organised by EFI for the French technicians.

Marcel G.J. Tilanus, Utrecht, The Netherlands – Nomination for EFI Secretary
I was born in 1953 in Hilversum, the Netherlands. In 1981 I graduated at the University of Utrecht in biology with main topics biochemistry and anthropogenetics. From 1981 I was introduced in the HLA system and got my PhD degree in 1986 at the Department of Immunohaematology and Bloodbank, Leiden. My thesis “DNA analysis of the HLA system” described the use of restriction fragment length polymorphism analysis for class II genes.

Four subsequent years (1986-1990) I established as post-doc a molecular biology laboratory at the agricultural university in Wageningen, the Netherlands. With a nice group of colleagues we studied MHC and Marek’s disease in chicken, including molecular, protein

I am a member of the European Federation for Immunogenetics from 1995 and a member of the Administrative Council of France Greffe de Moelle. From my past experience in the HLA field and in transplantation I believe I could provide services as deputy treasurer.

If Of these candidates Ralf Wassmuth has served as councillor before, but is according to the EFI constitutions, eligible as councillor for a second term. Since Marcel Tilanus is presently a councillor, and if his nomination as secretary is approved by the General Assembly in Sofia, we will have an additional vacant position as councillor after the General Assembly in Sofia.

I thus ask you to vote for three new councillors. If this is approved by the General Assembly no new nominations and voting for the additional vacant position as councillor (after Marcel Tilanus) will be necessary.

If you are paid-up EFI member you should use your rights to vote. So please, fill in the ballot form, which is enclosed with this Newsletter, and send it to our secretary Leke Schreuder as soon as possible, following the instructions as indicated. To assist you with your decision, a short presentation of all candidates is included in this Newsletter.

Erik Thorsby
President
Jean-Marie Tiercy, Geneva Switzerland – Nomination for EFI Councillor

I was born in 1951 in Brigues, Wallis, Switzerland, and then moved rapidly to Geneva where I did my studies. In 1977 I graduated in biology at the University of Geneva, and obtained a PhD in molecular biology in 1983. From 1984 to early 1986 I was a postdoc at Stanford University in the Neurobiology Department, working on Nerve Growth Factor. At that time, HLA class I alleles were being sequenced in P Parham’s laboratory located on the floor below, while on the upper floor H. McDevitt and collaborators were sequencing mouse and human class II genes. This is where I received my first inoculation with the HLA virus.

In 1986 I was offered by M. Jeannet (former head of the Transplantation Immunology Unit at the University Hospital of Geneva) the opportunity to establish a molecular HLA typing laboratory at the Hospital. In collaboration with B. Mach we developed the so-called oligotyping method for HLA class II typing and very rapidly the technique was transferred to the clinical laboratory both for kidney and bone marrow transplantation. In the very early 90’s our laboratory was among the first to set up and apply class I DNA typing in unrelated bone marrow donor matching.

In 1996 I was nominated as a Privat Docent at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Geneva, and became head of the LNRH (National Reference Laboratory for Histocompatibility) at the University Hospital in 1998. My main research interests comprise the functional role of HLA and non-HLA polymorphisms in hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, diversity in HLA haplotypic associations, and population genetic studies.

Since 1998 I am a member of the Foundation of the Swiss Bone Marrow Donor Registry and I feel particularly concerned by improving the interactions between transplant centers, registries and HLA laboratories. As a founding member of the Standards and QA Committee at the early times of EFI, and as chairman since 2000, I enjoyed working out with highly motivated committee members several versions of the Standards. The rapid progress in technology, the ever growing HLA polymorphism, the needs for quality assessment, and the clinical relevance of non-HLA polymorphisms will be some of the challenging issues for the EFI Accreditation Committee. I am convinced that EFI must continue its activities under the principles of sharing protocols, cells, DNA, techniques, standardization, training programs, etc., and of collaborative studies that have characterized the HLA community since decades. Developments of immunogenetics in areas outside MHC should be actively supported, but without bypassing the central role of HLA molecules in transplantation.

Mats Bengtsson, Uppsala, Sweden – Nomination for EFI Councillor

I was born in 1958 and I graduated from medical school in Uppsala in 1984. I spent several years working in internal medicine and especially hematology and bone marrow transplantation. I became interested in the HLA field when working with allogeneic bone marrow transplants especially with regard to unrelated transplants. After finishing my PhD project covering immunological recovery post BMT I started to work at the Department of Clinical Immunology and Transfusion Medicine in Uppsala were I am the director of the Transplant Service Laboratory. My research interests have mainly been in the immunological aspects of stem cell transplantation. I am the chairman of a research committee from the Council of Europe on cellular immune therapies. Besides being an EFI inspector I also do inspections in stem cell transplantation.

I am also an active member of Scandiatransplant where I successfully argued for mandatory EFI accreditation of all H&I laboratories in Scandiatransplant. I have during last years been interested in quality assurance, and I am the contact person between the Swedish Medical Society and SWEDAC, the national accreditation body in Sweden. Here I have been active to establish the cooperation between SWEDAC and EFI for accreditation of H&I. The contract between EFI and SWEDAC was the first official recognition of EFI accreditation program. I am the Regional Commissioner for the Nordic region since 2003 and I have been in the Standards committee since 2002.

Prof. Dr. Antonio Arnaiz-Villena, Madrid, Spain – Nomination for EFI Councillor

I have been doing histocompatibility, immunodeficiencies, autoimmunity and cellular immunology and my career started with the much gifted Ivan Roitt and Hilliard Festenstein in London. I am now devoted mostly to bird and human MHC research in Madrid (see web page: http://chopo.pntic.mec.es/biolog), including HLA anthropology. I participated in HLA International Workshops since 1980 and organized non-classical class I polymorphism and other International HLA Workshop’s parts. I have published nearly 300 papers in Immunology, 9 books and directed thirty-five doctoral theses. I have also served as elected President of the Spanish Society for Immunology.
Ralf Wassmuth, Düsseldorf, Germany
Nomination for EFI Councillor

I am a graduate in Medicine from the University of Giessen in 1986. After graduation I worked as a Resident in Internal Medicine for one year at the Department of Medicine III at the University of Giessen. Thereafter, I joined the University of Washington, Seattle, USA, as a post-doctoral fellow during the period from 1988 to 1991 working with Åke Lernmark and Gerald T. Nepom in the field of immunogenetics of autoimmune diseases. In 1991 I moved to the Department of Medicine III and Institute for Clinical Immunology at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg (Head: Joachim R. Kalden). From 1991 until 2000 I have been in charge of the Division of Immunogenetics of the Department, serving North-Bavaria as a Eurotransplant Laboratory. In 2001, I moved to the Institute for Transplantation Diagnostics and Cell Therapeutics (Head: Peter Wernet) at the Düsseldorf University Medical Center. As a Co-Director of this ASHI accredited HLA Laboratory I am involved in immunogenetics and histocompatibility issues related to solid organ transplantation and blood stem cell transplantation. In 2003 I was appointed as Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Immunology.

I am one of the early members of EFI since the launch of EFI. Also, I am a co-founder of the German Society for Immunogenetics (DGI). Other memberships include the German Society for Immunology (DGfI) and ASHI. For EFI, I have previously worked as councillor. In addition, I was co-organizer of the 17th EFI Conference held in Baden-Baden in May 2003.

As a councillor I would like to continue my support of joint scientific activities within EFI as well as assist EFI training and accreditation programs directed at the quality of work in the field of transplantation.

Mahmut Carin, Istanbul, Turkey
– Nomination for EFI Councillor

I was born in 1945 in Istanbul. I am a graduate of Istanbul University and completed my doctoral thesis at Istanbul Medical Faculty. I worked in Biophysics and Physiology departments before I participated the establishment of Medical Biology Department at the same faculty. I then moved to work at several centers around the globe to get experienced in immunogenetics and histocompatibility: Dept. Immunohematology and Blood Bank, LUMC, Leiden, The Netherlands, Dept Transplantation Immunology, New Addenbrook’s Hosp. Cambridge, UK, Dept. Immunology Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen, Denmark are some of these. I got my professorship at Medical Biology Department, Istanbul Medical Faculty in 1988, where I was appointed as a director in 1992. I am now chairing the same department with some 30 staff in my team and working mainly on histocompatibility for solid organ, stemcell transplantations and immunogenetic analysis for chromosomal aberrations, immunosuppressive drug level measurements. Apart from holding EFI accreditation since 1999 and becoming an EFI inspector since 2002, my department serves as a reference and education laboratory in Turkey and Middle East Countries. I am one of the pioneers in Transplantation Immunology in Turkey and was elected as chair of the Immunology Council and member of National Transplantation Coordinators Council at the Ministry of Health in 2003. I am also director of Istanbul Medical Faculty Bone Marrow Bank. My future aspiration is to promote histocompatibility and immunogenetics in Turkey and in nearby geography. I am also the chairman of the local organising committee that will organise the 19th European Immunogenetics and Histocompatibility Conference to be held in Isatnbul in 2005.

Christian H. Seidl, Frankfurt, Germany
– Nomination for EFI Councillor

I am assistant professor of experimental haematology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany. Following graduation from Medical School (University of Frankfurt) in 1988, I trained in internal medicine and transfusion medicine at the State and University Hospital of Frankfurt. I spent several years as a clinical scholar fellow in the immunology program at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre, New York, NY, where I studied the regulation of HLA-class II gene expression. My basic training in immunogenetics has been at the Lindsley F. Kimball Research Institute, New York, NY. I am currently the director of the Department of Transplantation Immunology and Immunogenetics at the Institute of Transfusion Medicine and Immunohematology in Frankfurt.

I had major influence in establishing the Quality Management Section at the institute and am deputy Quality-Management Officer for the Red Cross Blood Donor Service Baden-Württemberg-Hessen. I am member of several scientific societies, where I actively contributed to committee work focusing on the fields of accreditation, standards and quality management. Since 1999 I am EFI inspector and currently president of the German Society for Immunogenetics (DGI). My research involves autoimmune disease mechanisms and immune regulation by natural killer cells.
A number of committee meetings were organised in Vienna on November 8 and 9, 2003. The local organiser Gottfried Fischer selected a nice hotel in Viennese style for our stay. In between these meetings we were treated to a musical surprise from our local organiser and his friends. Vienna presented us with beautiful autumn colours, and some of us were even able to spot a few Lipizaner horses in the Spanish Riding School.
Introducing HaploPrep for haplotype-specific extractions

Principle

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We have been asked by the Editorial Board of Human Immunology to be guest editors for a volume of Human Immunology which will collect frequency data in Histocompatibility and Immunogenetic genes in different normal populations. We envisage that the majority of data will be HLA but we will also include data for cytokines, KIR, MIC, TAP, LMP and other immunogenetic loci if we obtain such data.

We are now calling for individuals to provide this data. Each population or group of populations (if you consider that more appropriate) would be published as a brief communication with your name(s), affiliation etc.

It is difficult to obtain such data at one source and the volume intends to overcome that difficulty. The data will also be entered into the website www.allelefrequencies.net. It is hoped that this venture will be updated in future years.

We wish to implement the following criteria in the collection of the data:

**Demographic data**
Data will be collected according to ethnicity, sample size, family background (i.e. grandparents or parents from same population) urban or rural, source of population, method used.

**Frequency data**
1. At least 80% of the data must be to the allele level (4 digit for HLA)
2. Data may be previously published, or may not be, or can be from workshops.
3. In addition to the frequency of alleles we require the list of alleles tested but not found in that particular population.
4. We will supply a spreadsheet for data to be entered in order to retain uniformity.
5. We are also keen to obtain haplotype data with linkage disequilibrium.

Please contact us at:
derek.middleton@bll.n-i.nhs.uk

Derek Middleton
Marcello Fernandez-Vina

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**United Kingdom National External Quality Assessment Schemes for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics Laboratories**

**UK NEQAS for H&I Schemes are open to laboratories overseas as well as UK and appropriate commercial laboratories**

**The Role of External Quality Assessment (EQA) in Laboratory Medicine**
External Quality Assessment (EQA) is a service where participating clinical laboratories are sent samples on a regular basis, which they test as if they had come from patients. Results are returned to EQA centres that provide a report that compares the participant’s performance with that of all laboratories and/or groups of laboratories using the same test method(s). EQA complements the Internal Quality Control (IQC) procedures that laboratories use to monitor within- and between analytical run variability.

**The UK NEQAS Organisation**
This is a confederation of EQA schemes whose members comply with the UK NEQAS Code of Practice. This embodies the primary educational aims and not-for-profit status of UK NEQAS, firmly based in the science of laboratory medicine. The UK NEQAS professional body - The UK NEQAS Consortium - is a Company limited by guarantee and a Registered UK Charity. It is composed of Organisers or Managers of member Schemes and is served by an elected Executive Committee. Virtually all Member Schemes are located within NHS Trust Hospital clinical service laboratories or University Departments. Comprehensive information is available on the UK NEQAS Web site - URL:www.ukneqas.org.uk

**UK NEQAS for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics**
UK NEQAS for H&I is hosted by the Welsh Transplantation and Immunogenetics Laboratory of the Welsh Blood Service. Dr Chris Darke is Head of Laboratory and UK NEQAS for H&I Organiser; Susan Corbin is UK NEQAS for H&I Manager. UK NEQAS for H&I is advised by a Steering Committee of H&I professionals and a representative from the British Society for Histocompatibility & Immunogenetics.

For 2004 UK NEQAS for H&I will operate eight EQA Schemes:

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These Schemes are aimed at providing EQA to encompass the clinical H&I service repertoire of the majority of laboratories:

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UK NEQAS for H&I Schemes are open to laboratories overseas as well as UK participants and appropriate commercial laboratories. Scheme performance is totally confidential (although poorly performing UK laboratories are subject to various reporting procedures).

For further information and a copy of the 2004 Prospectus please contact: Susan Corbin, UK NEQAS for H&I Manager, Welsh Transplantation and Immunogenetics Laboratory, Welsh Blood Service, Ely Valley Road, Talbot Green, Pontyclun CF72 9WB, Wales, United Kingdom.
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