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*News from the Society of
Medical Biochemists of Serbia*

VLP REPORT BELGRADE SMBS PROMOTING BCLF IDENTITY IN BELGRADE WITH THE E-NERGIZED SMBS

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*Prof Damien GRUSON, IFCC Member EC-Emerging Technologies Division,
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With a 7,000 year of history, Belgrade is one of the oldest cities in Europe. From ancient Slavic tribes, over Roman and Ottoman Empire, to Austro-Hungarians, Belgrade has always been a meeting point among different civilizations. The fusion of cultures is best expressed in the Serbian good neighbourly relations, traditional cuisine and folklore, creating a unique ambiance and a very warm hearted atmosphere that we appreciated during the social dinner at the historical restaurant of the »Dom Aero Kluba« located at the corner of Uzun Mirkova and Kralja Petra streets. Today, Contemporary Belgrade is a modern European capital with over 2 million citizens, an economic and scientific hub of the entire region, the most accessible Balkan country and the city where the 15th Belgrade symposium for Balkan regions was given the utmost attention, making all delegates feel very special and distinguished while in the capital of Serbia.

The congress organized from April 11–12th, 2019 by the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia (SMBS), full member of EFLM and IFCC was held at the conference center of the Hyatt Regency in new Belgrade, located on the left bank and under the watchful eye of Pobednik »the Victor«, statue built in 1928 by Ivan Mestrovic, looking forward across the confluence of the Sava and the Danube. It is one of the most popular visual symbols of the city, located in the Belgrade fortress at the place where the medieval castle stood once. Three hundred participants attended the symposium from all Balkan countries, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Turkey as well as from the Austria, Belgium, Cyprus France, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Slovenia. There were eight sessions and 36 outstanding oral presentations covering state-of-the-

art topics in laboratory medicine in hemostasis, drug management, endocrinology, -omics as well as leadership skills, lab organization and planning, quality management and accreditation.

The role of the specialist in lab medicine is becoming more complex and as such requires increasingly a deep understanding of management, strategy, education and new technologies to improve clinical laboratory practices. The conference allowed us to have a detailed diagnosis of the national organization's and practices. We discovered the latest trends in harmonization of training, territorial strategies with private and public labs networks as well as the use of state-of-the-art technologies in all the BCLF countries. Such presentations provided, a clear vision of the needs and expectations of each Balkan member society and a profound insight of the construction of the BCLF identity in a dynamic context, highlighting the specificities of each country and reinforcing the similarities of this regional community sharing certain strong values to improve the quality of care and public health.

In the country of the genial Nikola Tesla, Serbian-American, engineer-physicist and modern Prometheus, it was a great honor as chair of the IFCC C-MHBLM to open the congress with a plenary lecture on preparing the specialist of lab medicine to deliver the digital future. Prof Damien Gruson, distinguished representative of the IFCC-EC-ETD, chaired by Prof Sergio Bernardini, delivered a lecture on digital tools in Lab medicine and presented the very attractive concept of Machine learning, defined as a small part of the study of AI and referring to a specific sub-section of computer science related to constructing efficient algorithms that can make accurate predictions about future clinical outcomes.

The path of genomics, digital medicine and AI incorporation into clinical practices is fraught of challenges. Technological innovation is increasingly shift the balance of care toward more centralized highly specialized care and decentralized testing. Through progressively miniaturized and increasingly powerful mobile computing capabilities, everyone is now capable of monitoring, tracking and transmitting health metrics continuously. Harnessing the power of digital technologies via biosensors, wearables for diagnostic and remote monitoring, smart phones, tablets, computers, web portals and telemedicine is essential for achieving universal health coverage. These new devices are not end in themselves, they are vital tools to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable and people must be assured that their own data is safe. We need to assimilate quickly the changes and create a culture of innovation and visionary digital leadership and be aware on any eth-

ical implications. Successful implementation in lab medicine is requiring education, more intensive training and investment in informatics, genomic medicine for the future generation as well as effective clinical and managerial governance processes.

Congratulations to Prof Dr Nada Majkic-Singh, SMBS National Representative, for continuing actively her legendary journey of promoting the Balkans, for her achievements in Lab Medicine and mentorship inspiring the next generation. Thank you to Doc Dr Zorica Sumarac, President SMBS; and to Dr Snezana Jovicic, co-President COC and SD committees and all who contributed to making the Balkan symposium a great success. This 15th Belgrade symposium successfully combined the high-level scientific program, a large turnout of the IVD companies and enlightening social interactions, blended with great hospitality. Belgrade (Serbia) is in a remarkable regeneration, and one of the most exciting places for promoting Lab Medicine.



Bernard Gouget and Snežana Jovičić, Chairs of Session I



Bernard Gouget (France)



Damien Gruson (Belgium)



Snežana Jovičić (Serbia)



Bernard Gouget (France), Snežana Jovičić (Serbia), Damien Gruson (Belgium)



Bernard Gouget with colleagues (from left to right): N. Makić-Singh, B. Gouget, Z. Šumarac, S. Jovičić, D. Gruson, V. Matović, G.Lippi, J. Ćorić



Lecturers on 15th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan Region, 2019: A-M Šimundić, G. Beastall, N. Majkić-Singh, Z. Šumarac, B. Gouget, G. Lippi, V. Kalimanovska-Spasojević, D. Gruson, E. Homšak, J. Leniček-Krleža



Symposium lecturers during Speakers Dinner



Vesna Matović (Serbia), Tomris Ozben (Turkey), Bernard Gouget (France), Nada Majkić-Singh (Serbia)

15th BELGRADE SYMPOSIUM FOR BALKAN REGION

Laboratory Medicine Management: Leadership Skills for Effective Laboratory

dr Snežana Jovičić

Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia

Liaison Member of the IFCC eNewsletter Working Group

The Belgrade Symposium organized by the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia, held on 11 and 12 April, continued the fourteen years long tradition of EFLM Symposiums for Balkan Region. The 15th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan Region continued tradition of gathering laboratory medicine professionals from the Balkan countries in order to share experience and discuss topics of mutual interest, therefore the new title of the Symposium was »Neighboring Countries: the Same Professional Aim«. However, the borders of the Symposium expanded beyond the Balkans, and this regional meeting had also speakers from Italy, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Cyprus, and Israel. The Symposium was organized under the auspices of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (IFCC), European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM), Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF), Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Serbia and Ministry of Health of Serbia.

During two days and within eight sessions, eminent foreign and local experts intr.1of medical laboratory and strategy, laboratory medicine management, leadership skills, accreditation and competencies, laboratory standards in Balkan countries, as well as challenges in laboratory medicine that we meet today.

After the opening ceremony and welcome addresses of the EFLM President-Elect, prof. Ana-Maria Šimundić; EFLM Secretary, prof. Giuseppe Lippi; BCLF President, dr Jozo Čorić, and prof. Vesna Matović, the President of the Pharmaceutical Association of Serbia, the Symposium was opened with the session hosted by the IFCC Emerging Technologies Division. Professors Bernard Gouget and Damien Gruson presented how we can use e-health tools in medical laboratories to obtain better outcomes, as well as the benefits of digital tools and

machine learning in laboratory medicine. The Symposium continued with the inspiring session dealing with leadership skills. The characteristics and skills necessary for a leader in laboratory medicine, all the aspects of project management important in laboratory medicine practice, and the importance of communication between the clinical laboratory and its users were presented by professors Ana-Maria Šimundić, Giuseppe Lippi, and Graham Beastall.

The central part of the Symposium was sharing experiences between regional countries in implementing laboratory standards, harmonization, and teaching and training in laboratory medicine. Experiences from Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia, and Bulgaria were presented by Evgenija Homšak, Jasna Leniček-Krleža, Svetlana Ignjatović, Ermin Begović, Najdana Gligorović-Barhanović, Anyla Bulo Kasneci, Danica Labudovic, and Margaritka Bončeva.

The second day of the Symposium was opened by two sessions dedicated to laboratory organization and planning. Very important and provocative issue of management of laboratory tests demands through personal experience was presented by professor Dunja Rogić. Prof. Nataša Bogavac-Stanojević presented her work where she showed through cost-effectiveness analysis that the increase in laboratory use could actually decrease hospital costs. The use of six sigma for risk management and the optimal design of analytical quality control in clinical laboratory practice was presented by Adriana Unić. Also, the current views on measurement uncertainty in everyday practice were presented by dr Neda Milinković. Laboratory role in accreditation of healthcare institutions by the Agency for Accreditation of Healthcare Institutions in Serbia was presented from two point of views, of a surveyor (prof. Zorica Šumarac) and a chief of accredited laboratory (dr Vera Lukić).

The challenges met in laboratory medicine covered evolving regulatory challenges in in vitro diagnostics, presented by prof. Tomris Ozben. Prof. Marielle Kaplan presented the efforts in national harmonization program of critical values communication in Israel. We were introduced with the assessment of medical residents' skills in choosing appropriate laboratory request and subsequent interpretation of laboratory tests results in a Romanian university center by prof. Ioana Brudașcă. Dr Dragana Pap presented the challenges and perspectives of QMS, and the road map for achieving standardization in laboratory medicine.

The final sessions dealt with specific areas of laboratory medicine, namely current positions in laboratory testing in hemostasis, laboratory drug management, and latest results in endocrine disruptor research. About the latest protocols in laboratory diagnostics of anticoagulation, laboratory testing of lupus anticoagulant using different aPTT reagents, and assessment of hipercoagulable state in normal pregnancy and preeclampsia using global haemostatic assays talked prof. Andrea Griesmaher, prof. Violeta Dopsaj, and Sanja Lalić-Ćosić. The contribu-

tion of laboratory to therapeutic drug monitoring, challenges, and perspectives, integration of pharmacogenomics in clinical practice, as well as the latest research results in pharmacogenomics of the antidepressants of the SSRI group were presented by Prof. Nicholas Papegeorgakis, Angela Melpidou, Andriani Grigoratou, and prof. Vesna Pešić. The Symposium was closed with the presentation of the latest research results on endocrine disrupting chemicals inducing oxidative stress, their effect on organisms, and particularly the influence of di-2-ethylhexyl phthalate on the oxidative stress tissue damage and on the fatty acids composition, by prof. Nuriye Nuray Ulusu and Dr Duygu Aydemir.

The two day Symposium with over 250 participants pointed out the same issues and problems that laboratory medicine professionals in this region meet in their every day work and practice, provoking discussions and exchange of opinion. The positive impressions of all the participants demonstrated that these local meetings addressing the practical issues that we are all facing and exchanging experience are necessary in laboratory medicine practice, and that the local problems are usually common.



Chairs of the Opening Session: Dr Bernard Gouget (France) and dr Snežana Jovičić (Serbia)



Speakers and chairs of the 15th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan region



Speaker's dinner



Speakers and chairs of the 15th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan region