



## European Federation of Immunological Societies

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To:

EFIS member societies

***\*Please distribute information  
among individual members!\****

February 16, 2009

### Important Reminders to all EFIS Members!!!

Dear Colleagues,

As you all know, at the EFIS General Assembly during ECI 2009 in Berlin, **a new EFIS Board will be elected**. We kindly invite and encourage your Society to propose candidates for the position of Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary General.

Also, the **venue of ECI 2015 will be selected**. We kindly ask your Society to consider the possibility of organizing this congress in your country in 2015 and cordially invite you to submit your proposal. If you need a template for your application (i.e. congress documentation form), please contact [efis@mpiib-berlin.mpg.de](mailto:efis@mpiib-berlin.mpg.de). **Please note that the deadline is May 31st, 2009!** The nominations/ bids should be submitted to Anna Erdei, General Secretary both electronically and in hard copy (see address to the right).

In addition to the elections, I would like to remind you of the deadlines for the following awards:

**EFIS-Schering Plough Immunology Prize** This highly reputable prize consists of a € 50,000 cash award plus travel support to attend the ECI 2009. Please find the award outline at:

<http://www.efis.org/Award%20Outline%20Schering%20Plough.pdf>

Deadline for nominations is May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009

**EFIS-EJI Ita Askonas Prize** We have established a new award to recognize the best young female Immunologists in Europe. This prize consists of a €



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10,000 cash award plus travel support to attend the ECI 2009. Please find the award outline at:  
<http://www.efis.org/Award%20Outline%20Ita%20Askonas.pdf>

Deadline for nominations is May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009

**Day of Immunology 2009:** There will be attractive awards for the best initiatives which should help to make immunological expertise more accessible for the general public. Please visit [www.dayofimmunology.org](http://www.dayofimmunology.org) for details. Deadline for submission is June 15, 2009.

Lastly, please note that **EFIS will offer 300 travel grants at 500 € each for young scientists** (Post Docs and PhD students under 35 years) **to attend the 2nd European Congress of Immunology** (ECI 2009) in Berlin. The age limit will not strictly apply to applicants from Eastern European countries. Please download the application form at:

[http://www.efis.org/EFIS\\_ECI2009\\_scholarships.pdf](http://www.efis.org/EFIS_ECI2009_scholarships.pdf)

Deadline for application is April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009!

The EFIS board is looking forward to receiving your submissions!

Yours sincerely,

Stefan Kaufmann,  
EFIS President

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ECI 2009, Press Release Nr. 1

Immunity for Life – Immunology for Health: 1st Invitation to ECI Berlin 2009

“Immunity for Life – Immunology for Health”: with this as their motto, all National European Societies of Immunology will convene from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2009, in Berlin, Germany. This Congress offers a four day comprehensive program on the state of the art in Immunology. Professor Reinhold E. Schmidt, the president of the Congress and Director of the Clinic for Immunology and Rheumatology at Hanover Medical School, is pleased to invite journalists to attend this event.

Following the highly successful first Congress of Immunology 2006 in Paris, European Immunologists will now meet in Berlin for ECI 2009 Berlin (2<sup>nd</sup> European Congress of Immunology). The Congress offers a broad spectrum of topics in more than 30 symposia and 60 workshops, covering topics from basic research to applied Immunology. “The foci of this meeting are newly acquired knowledge about innate and adaptive immunity, the various aspects of immunological diseases, as well as new options for immune interventions”, stresses Prof. Schmidt.

The immunologists meet under the umbrella of EFIS (European Federation of Immunological Societies), which comprises 27 national societies of this discipline with a total of 13,000 members. During the Congress two outstanding research prizes will be awarded: the 50,000 € “EFIS Schering-Plough Prize in Immunology”, given for the second time, and for the first time the 10,000 € “Ita Askonas Prize”, awarded to young female researchers in the early stages of their careers.

Moreover, the Congress will offer a job-fair for young scientists as well as special events for self-help groups and interested members of the public. In addition, students from Berlin and surrounding areas are offered the opportunity to learn more about the enormous research in the area of Immunology and its role in health.

Further information:

[www.eci-berlin2009.com](http://www.eci-berlin2009.com)

Please direct questions to:

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ECI 2009, Press Release 2

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009

## **Lessons from TeGenero**

### **Immunologists discuss new safety standards**

In March of 2006, six healthy men experienced the nightmare of their lives during a TeGenero drug trial in London, England. Shortly after the injection of TGN1412, a monoclonal antibody destined for use against multiple sclerosis, arthritis and/or leukaemia, they developed dramatic immune reactions with serious consequences. What happened? And how can such events be avoided in future drug testing, without completely inhibiting all new innovations?

Experts will discuss this issue at the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Congress of Immunology in September in Berlin.

The TeGenero-case was unnerving for doctors and scientists in the area of immunology. It was largely unclear as to what exactly took place and how such events could be avoided in the future, though a careful examination by the British health care authorities excluded any obvious mistakes such as contamination, protocol violations or inappropriate dosages.

In December of 2006, a group of scientific experts published a detailed analysis of this incident, including 22 recommendations for the preclinical development of drugs, as well as the transition to clinical trials in humans. Various aspects were covered, including the calculation of the starting dose, the selection of trial individuals, the necessity of sequential treatment and the requirements for the clinical settings. In September of 2007, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) developed new safety regulations for the clinical trials in humans. Although many new substances have undergone clinical trials without adverse reactions, there remains a level of

uncertainty in the determination of potential health risks during the first application of a drug in humans. This is due to the fact that experimental data from animal models are not always transferrable to humans.

In a workshop at the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Congress of Immunology, relevant issues concerning the selection of appropriate animal models and safety testing will be intensely discussed. Also in focus will be the newest developments in targeted anti-inflammatory biologicals and small molecules, which are directed exclusively against certain pathogenic cytokines or cell surface structures. In the last years, these types of drugs, particularly monoclonal antibodies or fusion proteins, have been successfully implemented in clinical practice for the treatment of serious immunological diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis or chronic inflammatory bowel diseases. However, the risk of unexpected adverse effects cannot be completely eliminated, even with new highly effective and specific binding substances, and the consequences of long term treatment are difficult to predict, especially if the drug's target plays a key role in the immune system.

All experts agree that development and testing of new substances should be carried out as safely as possible. On the other hand, the restrictions and hurdles should not be so high that new developments are not possible. In particular, patients with inflammatory diseases are in urgent need of new treatment options. These somewhat contradictory requirements can only be adequately balanced and prioritised with profound new knowledge and discoveries. The aim of the workshop, therefore, is to demonstrate very promising innovations in the area of anti-inflammatory biologicals and discuss future developments.

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