

ESF RESEARCH CONFERENCES

Rapporteur Report

Partnership:	ESF-EMBO
Conference Title:	Antiviral RNAi : From Molecular Biology Towards Applications
Dates:	11-15 June 2012
Chair:	Dr. Juan Antonio García Álvarez, Centro Nacional de Biotecnología (CNB), ES
Rapporteur:	Prof. Martin Röllinghoff, Erlangen-Nuremberg Universität, DE

This very informative ESF-EMBO Research Conference on Antiviral RNAi was directed by Prof. Juan Antonio Garcia, ES, together with Ben Berkhout, NL, and Prof. Jens Kurreck Berlin, DE.

About 50 participants out of 19 countries attended the meeting (more than 25 Post-Docs and senior scientists, and 24 invited speakers). The delegates were mostly from Europe, but also from Australia, Canada, India, USA and Taiwan.

Prof. García, together with his dedicated colleagues, and supported by a highly respected international faculty, has come up with an excellent program of lectures and some short talks, that covered all major areas of Antiviral RNAi from Molecular Biology to future Application in the clinic.

The meeting started off with a short presentation of ESF by the rapporteur.

Thereafter, 5 sessions covered the following topics:

- RNAi and viral infections in mammals
- RNAi and viral infections beyond mammals
- Counter defence and counter defence in viral infections
- Interplay between RNAi and other antiviral defence mechanisms
- Towards therapeutics

The sessions included 12 selected short 20 minutes-talks of younger scientists, in addition of presenting their posters in the poster sessions. The three best posters were honoured by a special award. Altogether more than 22 posters were on display.

Of great interest were the vivid discussions by all participants after the talks and during coffee breaks and after dinner. Some of the senior faculty were able to attract and to fascinate the participants.

The Symposium took place at Polonia Castle, set in the lovely little town Pultusk, located near by the river Narew, 70 km north of Warsaw. Accommodation was very good and catering excellent. The hotel is surrounded by a lovely park. In and outside the hotel there were equipments for sporting activities available.

Altogether, I feel, the Symposium was a great success, because it was very well organized. The faculty was extremely well selected. It was therefore somehow a pity, that contrarily to the expectations of the chairs of the meeting only a smaller number of junior scientists made their way to Polonia castle. One may speculate that the place Putulsk did not attract the younger generation as did St. Feliu. I could see that Cracow would be an interesting alternative. Certainly there was no gender issue at the meeting.

Unfortunately, I had to leave earlier on the last day, but I was informed that at the end of the symposium a questionnaire was to be distributed to rank the lecturers, the posters, the poster sessions, accommodation, catering, etc.

The Chair and the Co-Chair must be congratulated as they were able to raise some additional sponsor-money that allowed supporting several PhD-students to attend. Thus the modest ESF money was well spent.

Erlangen 18.06.2012

Prof Martin Röllinghoff