

# ESF RESEARCH CONFERENCES

## Rapporteur Report

Partnership:	ESF-EMBO Symposium
Conference Title:	Bacterial Networks (bacnet13)
Dates:	16-21 March 2013
Chair:	Prof. Regine Hengge, Freie Universität Berlin, DE
Rapporteur:	Prof. Tanel Tenson, University of Tartu, EE

### General Comments

Bacterial networks is a rapidly developing scientific discipline. There have been previous European meetings on the topic but as the field develops rapidly, every meeting has a new focus and includes novel subtopics (sessions).

### Quality of Scientific Programme, Presentations and Discussion

The scientific programme was of very high quality. The sessions included two 30 minute presentations by invited speakers and two 15 minute presentations selected according to the abstracts submitted. The invited speakers were leading scientists in the field and the short talks were of high quality. It is important to emphasize that the programme has a whole was a success: the presentations covered a wide variety of topics but still matched each other well. New and exciting research directions were covered.

There were three poster session with 116 posters in total. The poster sessions were very active, with plenty of discussion.

### Informal Networking and Exchange; Atmosphere

The atmosphere was conducive for easy exchange of information. The discussions occurred during coffee breaks, meals that were organized jointly for all participants and poster session. In addition, there was a longer lunch break that allowed informal discussions in smaller groups. Younger researchers were well integrated.

Unusual for a scientific meeting was incorporation of a Science and Society session "Creative experiments at the interface of science and society". This included a presentation by image analysis specialist who commented on the culture of image analysis, processing and presentation in microbiology. The session also included presentations by two artists who's work is inspired by molecular- and microbiology. This session was a great success by inspiring discussions and contributing to the atmosphere of the conference.

### Balance of Participants

Most of the participants were from Europe, the participants outside Europe being real leaders in the field. There were more invited speakers from Germany and Switzerland than from other countries. This probably reflects the research activity in the field in different European countries.

There was a good balance between young and senior participants, male and female participants and between different subfields.

### Outlook and Future Developments

Unfortunately the ESF networking activities have been discontinued. The participants discussed possibilities of establishing local networks (inside one country, joint programming actions between countries where possible).

### Follow-up

It was a common opinion of the participants that the meeting was a great success and it should continue as a conference series.

### Organisation and Infrastructure

In general the venue, catering and administration were appropriate for the conference. Participants were satisfied with the administration and support. Social events in the conference programme are perfect for stimulating discussions. This conference included an excursion. Unfortunately the excursion included 2 + 2 hours bus ride that was not very

stimulating. Organization of the social event / excursion might be improved in the future to include more time for interactions and not to include long bus rides.

### **Summary & Overall Assessment**

I find that the conference was extremely successful. Several participants commented that it was one of the best conferences where they have participated.

The organizers expressed hope that EMBO/ESF could support additional Bacnet meetings in the future. Considering the fact that the field is moving rapidly and this event was excellent, it might be considered by the funding panel.