

Rapporteur Report

Partnership:	ESF/EMBO
Conference Title:	Thiol-based redox switches.
Dates:	12-17 September 2015
Chair:	Prof. Johannes Herrmann, University of Kaiserslautern, DE
Rapporteur:	Tanel Tenson

General Comments

Any general comments you might have concerning the conference, your role, the scientific area covered by this conference, etc.

Regulation of cell physiology through thiol based switches is a rapidly developing research area. This was a second ESF-EMBO meeting and I hope that a third one will be organized even after the EMBO-ESF program is closed. A similar conference series is in the Gordon conference series in US but it does not have so large impact on European researchers, especially considering the early stage scientists.

Quality of the Scientific Programme, Presentations and Discussion

Comments on the balance and scope of the scientific programme, the scientific quality of the presentations and discussions.

The scientific programme was of very high quality. The sessions included 40 minute presentations by invited speakers and 30 and 20 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 as 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 around seventy posters. The poster sessions were very active, with plenty of discussion.

An "elevator talk" session preceded each poster session. At these session the poster presenters had one minute for introducing their research topics. This session helped the audience to find posters of interest and was a useful experience for the presenters.

Informal Networking and Exchange; Atmosphere

*Was the schedule and the atmosphere conducive to an easy exchange of information?
Was there time and space for an informal discussion? Were younger researchers integrated?*

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.

Balance of Participants

*Was there an appropriate balance between young and senior participants?
Was a balance of national groups and researchers from different (sub)fields achieved?*

Participants were from 15 European countries and from 7 countries outside Europe:
Germany 40 participants;
US 13 participants;

UK 11 participants;
Italy 9 participants;
Spain 7 participants;
Belgium 5 participants;
Poland 5 participants;
Sweden 5 participants;
Netherlands 4 participants;
Uruguay 3 participants;
Canada 2 participants;
Hungary 2 participants;
Portugal 2 participants;
Russia 2 participants;
Australia 1 participant;
Brazil 1 participant;
Denmark 1 participant;
Finland 1 participant;
Japan 1 participant;
South Africa 1 participant;
Switzerland 1 participant.

German participants were overrepresented but otherwise the participation was well balanced. The organizers had made strong efforts to encourage participation of scientists from different regions of Europe. The domination of German scientists in the participant list was not reflected in oral presentations. The talks were given by scientists from different countries in a balanced manner. According to the information from the chair, the ESF-EMBO funding has been used for reducing the conference fee for young scientists.

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

Outlook and Future Developments

*Will new collaborations emerge from this conference?
(How) could the conference outcomes be utilised further?*

Unfortunately the ESF networking activities have been discontinued. At the forward look session the participants expressed strong support for continuation of the conference series by looking for other funding options. Organizers of the next meeting were already appointed.

In addition, the participants discussed possibilities of establishing local networks (inside one country, joint programming actions between countries where possible).

Follow-up

What immediate and long term follow-up would benefit collaborations and dialogues that may have begun at the conference?

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

*Were venue, catering and accommodation appropriate for this conference?
Were participants satisfied with the on-site administration and support?*

In general the venue, catering and administration were appropriate for the conference. Participants were very satisfied with the administration and support. Social events in the conference programme were perfect for stimulating



discussions. This conference included an excursion to Girona that had the benefit of short transportation times. And of course the historic centre of the town is certainly worth visiting.

Summary & Overall Assessment

Was the conference successful; were its aims achieved?

I find that the conference was extremely successful.

About ESF Research Conferences

The Scheme

This conference is part of the European Science Foundation's (ESF) Research Conferences Scheme. The Scheme aims to promote scientific excellence and frontier level research throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Conferences aim to provide leading scientists and other participants, including young researchers, with a platform to present their work, to discuss the most recent developments in their fields of research and to network.

Conference Format

The core activities should be based on lectures by invited speakers, who are leaders in their respective fields, followed by extensive discussion periods. An informal exchange of ideas, both inside and outside the lecture room, should be encouraged, and the number of sessions in the daily timetable should be limited in order to allow sufficient time for interaction between the participants. Time should be reserved for a 'Forward Look Plenary Discussion' about future developments in the field.

Participants can take all their meals together to encourage further contact and networking, which can be particularly beneficial to younger researchers who may be less outspoken in the formal lecture room setting. In order to gain optimum benefit from the conference, both the speakers and the participants are asked to stay for the whole duration.

Division of Tasks

The Conference Chair is responsible for ensuring the quality of the scientific programme through the selection and invitation of speakers, and through the selection of participants.

The ESF Conferences Unit is responsible for managing all the logistical aspects of the conference organisation, including the provision of an on-site secretariat.

Further information: www.esf.org/conferences