

## 18<sup>th</sup> ESAB NEWSLETTER – October 2005

The Scientific Committee of the EFB Section on Applied Biocatalysis (ESAB) had her 55<sup>th</sup> meeting in Cavtat/HR on 24 September 2005. A short report of this meetings is given below. ESAB had 807 members in September 2005, an increase of 39 since January this year.

### 1. Websites

Even though it is just a few month ago that I could inform you about the new ESAB website ([www.esabweb.org](http://www.esabweb.org)), I am happy to announce the birth of another digital baby: [www.bio-economy.net](http://www.bio-economy.net) is a portal, jointly powered by ESAB and EuropaBio, which links to a large variety of webpages and relevant documents about the bio-based economy. Go and have a look!

### 2. Past events (co-)organised by ESAB

The 6<sup>th</sup> **Carbohydrate Bioengineering Symposium** was organised by Antoni Planas in Barcelona/ES, 3-6 April 2005. There were 36 lectures (10 invited and 26 selected from the abstracts) and 152 posters. The symposium was well organised and had a high scientific level. Selected papers based on the lectures will be published in a special issue of *Biocatalysis and Biotransformation*, which will appear around Christmas.

A **Workshop on Biocatalysis in non-conventional media** was convened in Manchester, 13-14 April, by Rein Ulijn and Gill Stephens. The interest for this event was overwhelming: the organisers admitted 70 people but many more wanted to attend. One-third of the attendants came from industry. The first day and the morning of the second day contained lectures of key scientists in the field. In the second afternoon, the group was split in groups of ~15 people each, in order to identify the future challenges and topics for interdisciplinary consortia. The relatively small number of attendants allowed lively discussions.

**Biotrans 2005** was organised by Roger Sheldon, Adrie Straathof and Maurice Franssen in Delft/NL, 3-8 July. There were around 500 participants and both the scientific level and the logistics of the conference were very good, according to the opinions that I have received. A selection of full papers from the symposium will be published in a special issue of *J Mol Catal B: Enzym*, as usual.

**ECB12** took place at the DTU in Lyngby near Copenhagen, from 21-24 August. ESAB contributed to the programme with three sessions which were well attended. The symposium as such was well organised, although there were problems with the congress service bureau. The shortening of the programme to four days was well received by the participants and also the moderate registration fee was appreciated. Still, with 900 participants in total, the decline in attendance of the ECBs over the years was continued.

The Meeting on **Frontiers of Chemical Biology: Mechanistic Enzymology and Biocatalysis**, 31 August - 2 September, was hosted by the University of Exeter/UK, on their beautiful campus. The organiser, prof. Jennifer Littlechild, could welcome about 140 participants to this well-organised meeting, which aimed at building bridges between 'structural biochemists' and application-oriented chemists.

Our secretary Wim Soetaert organised a conference on **Renewable Resources and Biorefineries** in Ghent/BE, 19-21 September. There was an excellent programme and the attendance was high, about 300 people.

The second Conference on **Enzyme Reaction Engineering**, 21 – 24 September took place in Cavtat/HR (near Dubrovnik) in a fantastic 5-star hotel close to the coast, This small dedicated event was very well organised by prof. Durda Vasic-Racki. There were 51 participants, mostly from Germany and Croatia, but also from many other EU countries. The programme consisted of 21 oral presentations (of which 5 came from industry) and a poster session containing 16 posters.

### 3. Upcoming ESAB events in 2006 and beyond (incl. deadlines)

*Symposia (co-)organised by ESAB:*

**Multistep Enzyme Catalysed Processes**, 18-21 April 2006, Graz/AT, organised jointly by the Research Centre Applied Biocatalysis and ESAB. Plenary and invited lectures will be given by J. Bäckvall, J. Frost, U. Sauer, R. Sheldon, O. Ghisalpa, M.F. Gorwa-Grauslund, A. Liese, P. Macheroux and T. Sonke. The website <http://www.applied-biocat.at/mecp06> is continuously being updated! The deadline for all kinds of presentations is **19 December 2005**.

Symposium on **Environmental Biocatalysis: From remediation with enzymes to novel green processes**, to be held in Cordoba/ES, 23-26 April 2006 under the auspices of ESAB, see [www.icp.csic.es/abg/envbc2006](http://www.icp.csic.es/abg/envbc2006). Topics to be covered include: enzymatic remediation of xenobiotics, enzymes in textile and pulp/paper processes, desulfurization with enzymes, enzymes and energy, enzymes in green processes, use of immobilized cells, new tools (metagenomics, directed evolution) in the engineering of enzymes for environmental approaches. The following speakers have already agreed to participate: F.H. Arnold (keynote), L. Gianfreda, G. Gübitz, D.B. Janssen, A.T. Martinez, K.N. Timmis, R. Vazquez-Duhalt, D.S. Yaver. The **deadline** for oral presentations was 30 September 2005 but has been **extended**: it is still possible to submit abstracts! The deadline for posters and cheap registration **31 January 2006**.

**ESBES-6**, the symposium organised by our sister section on Biochemical Engineering Science, will take place in Salzburg/AT, 27-30 August 2006 (date not confirmed yet).

There will be another conference on **Protein Stabilization**, most probably in Exeter/UK, organised by prof. Jennifer Littlechild and dr. Tim Gibson. The event will take place in the first half of 2007.

There will also be a 7<sup>th</sup> version of the Carbohydrate Bioengineering Meeting (**CBM7**), in Braunschweig/DE, in 2007, under the auspices of ESAB.

*Non-ESAB events in 2006:*

BioCat 2006, 3-7 September 2006, TU Hamburg-Harburg/DE. The website will be [www.biocat2006.de](http://www.biocat2006.de).

### 4. Brussels affairs

The European Commission has set out the details of its proposal for a new programme to fund research and development from 2007 to 2013. The document sets out what the research content and topics will be for red, white and green biotech. These programmes will be discussed with the European Parliament, before being decided on by the Council. Governments are threatening to reduce these research budgets, it will be important for you to encourage them against cutting the research budget; they should find the cuts elsewhere! Detailed programme (includes info on what you might expect to see covered in future calls for proposals – be careful, it's 90 pages!)

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/pdf/specific\\_programmes/fp7sp\\_cooperation\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/pdf/specific_programmes/fp7sp_cooperation_en.pdf)

A Commission Press Release can be found on:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1171&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

Last September, two workshops were organised by ESAB and EuropaBio in Brussels in order to prepare the final version of the Strategic Research Agenda on Industrial Biotechnology. We hope to publish this final version on our website soon.

## **5. General Assembly**

The General Assembly of ESAB took place on Tuesday 5 July during Biotrans 2005. The chairman Maurice Franssen gave a presentation about the Technology Platform on Industrial Biotechnology and showed the latest composition of the ESAB Scientific Committee. Two new members for Italy were elected, dr. Lucia Gardossi (Trieste) and dr. Sergio Riva (Milan). They took over from dr. Giacomo Carrea and dr. Stefano Servi.

## **6. Journal Biocatalysis and Biotransformation**

In 1990, the Section (at that time called 'Working Party') on Applied Biocatalysis decided that it would be useful to have a dedicated journal for our field of research, and also to have a forum to post our position papers. So, we teamed up with the journal *Biocatalysis*, later renamed into *Biocatalysis and Biotransformation*. However, times have changed: biocatalysis is a well-established field nowadays which can be found in many different journals, and we have not written position papers since many years. At the 55<sup>th</sup> ESAB meeting, we have therefore decided no longer to have a 'section journal'. However, Taylor and Francis, the publisher of *Biocatalysis and Biotransformation*, has kindly informed us that they will keep their generous offer for ESAB members: registered members of ESAB are entitled to a discount on the personal subscription for this journal, at only €50 per year including online access on the basis of a single user network license.

*Maurice Franssen (chairman of ESAB)*