

10th ESAB NEWSLETTER

The Board of the EFB Section on Applied Biocatalysis (ESAB) had her 51th meeting in Basel, Switzerland, on August 30, 2003. A short report of the meeting is given below.

1. Recent symposia

BIOTRANS 2003, organised under the auspices of ESAB, took place in Olomouc, Czech Republic, 28 June –3 July last and was attended by 423 participants. This was a little lower than in previous Biotrans meetings, probably due to the remote location and the fact that the end of June is still teaching season in several European countries. There were 55 lectures and 269 poster presentations. The scientific level of the symposium was very good, as always.

The 11th European Congress on Biotechnology (**ECB11**) was held in Basel, Switzerland, 24–29 August last. There were around 1100 participants, also a decrease in attendance compared to ECB10 (but still 611 posters!). The two special sessions that ESAB organised (“Engineering the co-factor interface” and “Novel enzymes – frontiers in discovery and improvement”) were attended by ±120 and ±180 people, respectively, and were of excellent level. The proceedings of the sessions will appear as a special issue of *Biocatalysis and Biotransformation*.

2. General Assembly

The ESAB General Assembly took place during ECB11 on Monday, August 25. Although the meeting was well announced in the programme, only around 25 people showed up, the majority of them being members of the ESAB Scientific Committee. Nevertheless, some useful suggestions came from the audience:

Q: Why not organise a symposium on application of biocatalysis in textile industry?

A: Good idea, will be incorporated in the symposium on Environmental Biocatalysis, to be organised by dr. Antonio Ballesteros in 2006. Furthermore, there is one in Graz (Austria) next year, more info will come in the next newsletter.

Q: A symposium to bridge the gap between those groups who work on enzyme-substrate interaction and those who want to do applications of biocatalysts?

A: We feel that the biannual “Biotrans” is already bridging this gap, but we are open to more detailed suggestions.

Q: Can there be a list of useful websites in the newsletter?

A: OK, will be done in the next one, this one is already too long.

It is a pity that so few people were present at our General Assembly, since we would like to have your views on what we did and what we (should) do in the future. Therefore, for those who were not able to come, you can send me your comments/suggestions by e-mail. You will find my address at the bottom of this newsletter. Please be brief, I have already lots of e-mails to read per day.....

3. Upcoming events

Symposia (co-)organised by ESAB:

The second symposium about “**Biocatalysis in the Food and Drinks Industries**” will be held in Hohenheim (near Stuttgart, Germany), 19-22 September 2004. Organisers are prof. Lutz Fischer (Hohenheim) and dr. Maurice Franssen (Wageningen). The organisation is advancing well. There will be 1 keynote lecture, 10 invited speakers and 18 oral communications. The maximum number of participants has been set at 150. There is a website open, www.biocatalysis-hohenheim.de, on which further details will be announced in the near future.

The **6th International Conference on Protein Stabilisation** will take place in Bratislava, Slovakia, September 26-29, 2004. The organiser of the conference is dr. Milan Polakovic (Dept. of Chem. and Biochem. Eng., Slovak Technical University, Bratislava). The venue will be Hotel Danube, a 4-star hotel nicely located in the historical centre of Bratislava (for a virtual tour though the hotel you can

go to www.hoteldanube.com/eng/virtualna_prehliadka.html). A website for the symposium with online registration will be open in October.

Other events

International meeting on the **Biology of Bacteria producing Natural Compounds**, Biological Centre of the University of Groningen, Haren, the Netherlands, September 27-29, 2003, organised by the Dept. of Microbiol./Univ. of Groningen and the German Vereinigung für Allgemeine und Angewandte Mikrobiologie (VAAM Fachgruppe Biologie von Naturstoffproduzenten). The meeting aims to review recent developments in research on bacterial synthesis of metabolites, especially antibiotics and other secondary metabolites, with both oral and poster presentations. The website with further details and a registration form is <http://www.vaam.org>.

The IBC's 8th **International Enzyme Technologies for Industrial Scale-up** Symposium takes place October 13-15 of this year, in conjunction with the IBC's Premiere **Biocatalysis for Pharmaceutical Production**. These two conferences take place simultaneously at the Hilton Boston, Boston MA, USA. Registration allows attendance of sessions at both conferences. Please visit www.LifeSciencesInfo.com/enzymes for further information and registration.

2nd Moscow International Congress "**Biotechnology: State of the Art and Prospects of Development**", November 10-14, 2003, in The House of the Government of Moscow, Moscow, Russia, see <http://www.biotechworld.ru/eng/program.phtml> for complete information.

4. EFB matters

As you will hopefully know, ESAB is a section of the European Federation of Biotechnology (EFB). From the start of EFB, the German Society for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology (DECHEMA) actively supported EFB. They supplied the EFB-General Secretary and took care of the administration and communication with EFB-members, among others through the EFB-website. The relation between EFB and DECHEMA has been terminated by September 1 last, a request for a new EFB Central Office has been launched already. Until a new office has been established the Dutch EFB-Regional Branch Office in Delft will take over relevant matters. This may lead to some delay in the distribution of the ESAB-newsletter (which was done by DECHEMA in the past), for which I apologise.

5. New board of ESAB

At the meeting in Basel, a new Board of ESAB has been elected. Its composition is as follows: chairman dr. Maurice Franssen (Wageningen University, the Netherlands); vice-chairman dr. Roland Wohlgemuth (Fluka Chemie, Buchs, Switzerland); secretary dr. Wim Soetaert (Ghent University, Belgium).

Maurice Franssen (chairman)

maurice.franssen@wur.nl