

## **IUIS Secretary General's report 2014-2015 (Seppo Meri)**

### **General**

The focus of IUIS activities during the period 2014-2015 has been to

1. Strengthen the whole machinery of IUIS in collaboration with the new AMC/PCO (K.I.T.) by streamlining functional processes and enhancing activities in general, including increasing communication, increasing innovativeness and planning future congresses.
2. Strengthen the roles and activities of the different Committees, including the set-up of two new Committees (Vaccination/VAC and Immunotherapy/ITH). The future plan is to have at least once a year a meeting between the IUIS ExCo and individual Committees plus a meeting where all heads of Committees can discuss joint and relevant issues.
3. Continue and develop collaboration with Frontiers in Immunology to mutual benefit of IUIS and FMSA (Frontiers publisher). A new Committee, Publications Committee (PUB), was proposed to handle issues related to publishing.

### **IUIS Governance**

The Secretary General has operated from the Haartman Institute, University of Helsinki, Finland. E-Mail: [seppo.meri@helsinki.fi](mailto:seppo.meri@helsinki.fi), phone: +358-50-5812462, Skype: seppomeri. After the recruitment of K.I.T. as a AMC most activities of IUIS, especially those related to communication, are channelled through our central office in Berlin (c/o K.I.T.). Our bank account still remains in Vienna, Austria. The e-mail contacts to IUIS office at K.I.T. are [iuis-central-office@kit-group.org](mailto:iuis-central-office@kit-group.org) and [stanaka@kit-group.org](mailto:stanaka@kit-group.org). The street address of the headquarters of IUIS/K.I.T in Berlin is Kurfürstendamm 71. It has been a great pleasure to work with Sumiko Tanaka, whose energy and organisational skills (and sense of humor) are admirable.

### **Meetings**

The ExCo has had monthly teleconferences to discuss current issues and future strategies. Physical meetings have taken place in Berlin, Helsinki and Vienna (at the ECI2015 meeting). The Helsinki meeting was preceded by a brainstorming meeting in Mikkeli, East Finland in June, 2015 with the treasurer Nick King and the Frontiers in Immunology Editor-in-Chief Kendall Smith from New York. Vienna discussions were arranged with Committee heads, who were available. Also, meetings with organisers of both the ICI2016 Melbourne and ICI2019 Beijing meetings were arranged to

discuss practical arrangements and (in the case of ICI2019) an agreement between the Chinese Society for Immunology and IUIS. The general trend in future meetings is that they should follow the new IUIS protocols and be more clearly labelled as IUIS meetings. This means increased consistency and maintenance of institutional and organisational memory (including database of participants and sponsors). Accordingly, IUIS would take the full financial risk, as well, to lessen the burden of the local organisers.

The 62nd IUIS Council meeting was held in Nairobi, November 30, 2014 (see separate minutes). Planning for the ICI2016 meeting in Melbourne, Australia, organised by the Australasian Society for Immunology (José Villadangos as meeting President) is well underway. IUIS Council was concerned about the dominance of US speakers, but the organisers have now done their best to get the program more in balance without compromising the quality of the meeting. A formal agreement between IUIS and ASI has been signed. For the planned ICI2019 meeting in Beijing an agreement has been drafted and is now under viewing in Beijing.

The Secretary General has participated in several immunological meetings. These have included the European Complement Workshop in Uppsala, July 2-5, 2015, Autoimmunity meeting in Lofoten 20-24.8.2015 and ECI2015, 27-30.9, 2015 in Vienna. In Vienna many strategic IUIS meetings took place (ExCo, Committee meetings, organisers of ICI2016 and ICI2019).

### **Communication**

During 2014-2015 one of the strategic goals has been to increase communication with members and Committees. The website of IUIS has been revised and platforms to place documents electronically have been installed by K.I.T.. Most relevant documents can now be found at the IUIS website. Newsletters have been sent to members (the 10th one most recently). Internal communication within the ExCo has been increased by having monthly teleconferences. In addition, ad hoc meetings have been arranged when needed. The technical performance level has greatly increased after the recruitment of K.I.T. Letterheads, cards and other material for printing purposes have been prepared and are available at the IUIS website.

Frontiers in Immunology (<http://www.frontiersin.org/immunology>) has progressed well and established its position as the main Open Access immunology journal. It is the official journal of IUIS. The Frontiers in Immunology impact factor, anticipated for mid-2015, was finally approved by

Thomson Reuters in April, 2015, and will be launched in 2016.

In 2013 *Frontiers in Immunology* became a Nature family (NPG) journal, however this alliance has since become void. Also recently the nature of the collaboration between IUIS and FMSA has been questioned from the FMSA side, in part prompted by the renewal clause indicated in the contract between FMSA and IUIS. Collaboration between FMSA (represented by Fred Fenter) and IUIS was discussed at two meetings (Helsinki, June 25 and Vienna, September 7, 2015). It was agreed that the contract will continue as it is until the end of 2016. IUIS wishes to extend the contract until the end of 2020 to continue with its original intent to pursue a longer term collaboration. Negotiations are ongoing in that direction. IUIS will do its best to promote the journal further including the set-up of research topics, distribution of information to IUIS members and employment of *Frontiers* as a forum for publications related to IUIS meetings. IUIS emphasised that the journal authors, reviewers and the article payments mostly come from IUIS members. Without IUIS the journal would simply not survive.

### **Strategic planning**

IUIS has prepared a strategic plan with shared responsibilities to ExCo members and Committees. This is in the form of a Workbook. SG has as his main duties activities in communication and general maintenance issues, plus keeping records from the Council meetings.

Overall, a more systematic strategic planning is welcomed by the ExCo. This will make the goals of IUIS and duties of individual persons more transparent. It also makes it easier to transfer duties to future officers of IUIS. Challenges still exist in improving the financial strength of IUIS and keeping up-to-date contacts to individual member societies, and even to individual person members. With Committees, meetings have been planned in connection with the Council meetings (usually before them) or during other suitable occasions (like Federation meetings).

The ExCo wants to act proactively and support the Committees, which are the key in planning future activities. These include, in addition to the specific duties of each committee, also organising meetings and courses, acquiring sponsors and writing opinion papers, guidelines statements etc.

### **Concluding remarks**

To widen its activities, to recruit sponsors and to develop scientific, educational and organisational

activities IUIS needs active people. IUIS at the moment is in a developing stage, with the journal, newsletters, website and other activities. It wants to keep and develop further a positive mode and atmosphere within the Society.

The SG proposed the set-up of a new Publications Committee to take care of issues related to publishing (quality, quantity, nature, impact), publishers and finances related to publishing. In addition IUIS needs smaller, focused meetings and sponsors to support IUIS. Furthermore, small activity groups, including those of young immunologists could revitalise IUIS and help it to develop further to meet the needs of our members and to promote the ideas that people in the field have. Therefore, IUIS warmly welcomes new people to join and bring their ideas to our joint activities. IUIS is us, and we want to make it a forum and platform for interesting activities related to the fascinating science of immunology.

Reality has now demonstrated that the personnel at K.I.T. is always willing to help and provide their expertise to IUIS. Since this has also made the life of SG easier, I sincerely want to thank Sumiko Tanaka, Ben Hainsworth, Jocelyn Mülli and others for their excellent help in starting a new era at IUIS. I also want to thank the other members of ExCo and the IUIS Council for very pleasant and fruitful collaboration.

Sincerely and with best regards to all members

Helsinki, October 4th, 2015



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