EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF CLINICAL CHEMISTRY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

EuroLab News

THE EFLM BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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welcome to the new EFLM Executive Board

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Foreword

Reported by **Harjit Pal Bhattoa**, Editor EFLM EuroLabNews

This New Year issue of EuroLabNews marks an important transition for the European Federation of Laboratory Medicine (EFLM), combining strategic continuity with renewed leadership and vision. In his inaugural message, Professor Tomáš Zima, the new EFLM President, outlines priorities centered on value-based laboratory medicine, scientific excellence, sustainability, digital transformation, and stronger collaboration with clinicians, industry, and international partners. A key milestone is the formal adoption of the EFLM Strategy of Laboratory Medicine – Vision, underscoring patient-centred diagnostics, harmonisation, education, and innovation, and setting the framework for the forthcoming EFLM Strategic Conference 2026 in Prague.

The outgoing Past-President's address by Professor Tomris Ozben reflects on six years of leadership, highlighting major achievements including strategic conferences, expanded functional units, new task forces (notably in green laboratories, AI, harmonisation, and education), the introduction of EFLM Corporate Membership for IVD companies, and strengthened cooperation with European and regional federations. These initiatives have consolidated EFLM's role as the leading professional voice for laboratory medicine in Europe.

This issue also emphasizes capacity building and professional development, with the launch of the EFLM Young Laboratory Medicine Professional Award 2026, EFLMLabX exchange bursaries, and multiple calls for vacancies within EFLM committees, encouraging active engagement of both senior experts and young scientists. The Young Scientists Corner documents tangible progress in networking, visibility, and leadership of early-career professionals, particularly through EuroMedLab 2025 activities.

Sustainability remains a prominent theme. Practical guidance on green laboratory practices and a detailed report on achieving EFLM Green Labs accreditation illustrate how environmental responsibility can be integrated into routine laboratory operations. Scientific exchange is further reinforced through reports from recent EFLM webinars and a comprehensive overview of the 7th EFLM Conference on the Preanalytical Phase, reaffirming preanalytics as a cornerstone of quality, patient safety, and value-based care.

National society contributions—from Serbia and Spain—highlight educational excellence, research innovation, and the expanding role of the clinical laboratory in areas such as autoimmune diseases and microbiome research. The issue concludes with IFCC news, honoring distinguished colleagues, outlining global initiatives, and previewing major international events, alongside an extensive calendar of upcoming EFLM-endorsed meetings.

Overall, this edition reflects a dynamic, forward-looking European laboratory medicine community, firmly committed to scientific rigor, sustainability, harmonisation, and the continuous advancement of patient-centred diagnostics.

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Greetings from the New EFLM President

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is a great honor for me to assume the role of President of the European Federation of Laboratory Medicine (EFLM). I regard this position as a service and responsibility to our profession and to the community of national societies within EFLM.

The times ahead of laboratory medicine are very exciting and challenging. That is why, all important institutions and societies including EFLM ought to face this new reality. Just only permanent, inventive and reasonable transformation of the institutions, in which we are working together, can guarantee that these institutions will henceforth develop in the right direction. Successful EFLM leadership requires a clear vision based on scientific excellence in laboratory medicine, value-based laboratory medicine, ethical values, sustainability ("green labs"), and the ability to innovate while focusing on performance improvement new opportunities and the ability to encourage innovation. Equally important is continuous education and open discussion with our members—through meetings and modern communication platforms—on how laboratory medicine should best be organized and delivered.

My priority for developing EFLM will be – naturally with your help and support – to promote added value of laboratory medicine – value for clinical decision and also for cooperation with other medical disciplines – e. g. joint guidelines and meetings. We should align with the "choose wisely" campaign to be able to use the laboratory resources in a best possible way. We take into account that laboratory medicine can improve the delivery of quality of care and benefits for the wellbeing and, of course, for patients and our staff safety.

Emerging disciplines, digitalization, new technologies, and artificial intelligence will increasingly be integrated into daily laboratory practice. In pursuing our vision and priorities, we aim to strengthen cooperation with clinical associations, international organizations, universities, EU institutions, and industry partners—not only within Europe, but also globally.

I have served in the field of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine at both national and international levels for more than 25 years. I gained extensive experience within EFLM as a member of the Executive Board from 2011 to 2019, and the past two years on the Board have been particularly inspiring. The atmosphere within the Executive Board has been open, friendly, and constructive. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Mario Plebani, President of EFLM, for his leadership and strategic vision. During his presidency, the structure of EFLM functional units was re-organized to better respond to current challenges and to reflect the new era of laboratory medicine, with a strong emphasis on science and value-based laboratory medicine for society.

The Strategy of Laboratory Medicine – EFLM Vision was developed by members of the Executive Board, functional units, and national societies, and was approved in December 2025. For the first time, this strategic document was signed by three EFLM Presidents, highlighting the continuity and ongoing development of our Federation. The Strategy was published online in Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM) https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/cclm-2025-1678/html on December 30, 2025.

The strategic direction of the European Federation of Laboratory Medicine is guided by global healthcare trends, rapid technological advances, and the evolving role of laboratory professionals in modern medicine. EFLM reaffirms that every innovation in laboratory medicine must ultimately serve the patient—by ensuring equitable access to high-quality diagnostics, improving patient understanding, and strengthening trust in laboratory-generated data.

During my term as President of EFLM, I will particularly focus on:

1. Implementing the Strategy of Laboratory Medicine – EFLM Vision in daily practice through concrete actions developed in close collaboration with EFLM functional units.
2. Organizing the EFLM Strategic Conference 2026 – Laboratory Medicine for Society, to be held in Prague on April 24–25, 2026. The conference will include four main sessions: Harmonisation – the role of EFLM, Shaping the Future: AI, data-driven innovation, and emerging technologies in laboratory medicine, Cooperation with clinicians, Young scientists – visibility, communication, and education. Each session will be complemented by round-table discussions and dialogue with IVD companies and partners from laboratory and clinical medicine, providing a platform for broad discussion, sharing best practices, and identifying pathways to improve laboratory medicine not only in Europe but worldwide.
3. Updating the EFLM Syllabus for Postgraduate Education and Training for Specialists in Laboratory Medicine to reflect current scientific and professional standards.
4. Modernizing education and training programs to equip professionals with skills required for new technologies and evolving healthcare demands, including the integration of innovative digital tools and artificial intelligence within the EFLM Academy.
5. Increasing the involvement of young scientists in all EFLM activities, supporting exchange and training programs, and fostering future leadership in laboratory medicine.
6. Strengthening cooperation with national societies, IFCC, and regional federations by sharing best practices globally and supporting the development of laboratory medicine in developing countries.
7. Enhancing collaboration with international clinical medicine societies through platforms such as the BioMed Alliance (e.g. joint guidelines), patient organizations, and other stakeholders, improved communication, and exchange of innovation among academia, professionals, and industry.
8. Deepening cooperation with the IVD sector, e.g. through MedTech Europe, in areas of common interest such as harmonization and standardization, regulatory affairs, and promotion of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine.
9. Continuously improving the effectiveness and efficiency of EFLM activities and functional units, including evaluation mechanisms to ensure strong support for the EFLM community and long-term financial sustainability.

The key role of the EFLM President is to implement a proactive, transparent, and operational strategy that facilitates collaboration among EFLM functional units, national societies, IFCC, and regional federations, with the shared goal of advancing laboratory medicine—for people and with people.

I would like to sincerely thank all Past EFLM Presidents, Executive Board members, officers of functional units, and representatives of national societies for their voluntary service, dedication, and invaluable contributions to building a strong and visible EFLM.

I also wish to express my deep appreciation to the Executive Board members who have completed their outstanding service to EB EFLM: Professor Tomris Özben, Past President, for initiating the green labs project, the credit system CPECS, and corporate membership; Professor Klaus P. Kohse, our exceptional Treasurer and guardian of regulations and legal matters; and Professors Pilar Fernández-Calle and Dalius Vitkus for their many innovative ideas that will shape the future of EFLM.

Special thanks receive Professor Mario Plebani for his strong emphasis on science in laboratory medicine and on the added value of our discipline for patients and society. Under his leadership, the structure of EFLM functional units became more flexible and responsive to contemporary challenges.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Silvia Cattaneo, Silvia Terragni, and Alessia Carere from the EFLM Office. Their dedication and daily support are essential to the functioning and success of our Federation.

I look forward to prosperous, open-minded, constructive, and friendly cooperation with the EFLM Board, officers, national societies, and all stakeholders in advancing EFLM activities and shaping the future of laboratory medicine.

I wish you all the best, a happy, successful, and inspiring New Year 2026.

Yours
Tomáš Zima
President, EFLM

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Wishing the new

EFLM Executive Board

the best success for the next 2 years of mandate

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Greetings from the outgoing EFLM Past-President

Dear Colleagues, and Friends,
It has been a great honour and privilege to serve the EFLM community as President-elect, President, and Past President of the EFLM over a six-year term, from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2025. Throughout my tenure, my commitment has been focused on maintaining EFLM's position as the leading organisation representing Laboratory Medicine in Europe.
Upon assuming leadership, together with highly motivated members of the EFLM Executive Board and EFLM officers, I worked to further strengthen the solid foundations of the Federation. Our efforts were directed towards identifying new opportunities and strategies that would enable Laboratory Medicine to fully exercise its crucial role in patient care.
In recent years, EFLM activities have experienced steady growth through close collaboration with EFLM national societies and in vitro diagnostic (IVD) industry partners. These stakeholders actively engaged with EFLM in its endeavours, working together to share perspectives, suggestions, and challenges, and to reinforce EFLM's leadership role in advancing laboratory medicine and improving the quality of healthcare and medical laboratories across Europe.

The importance of EFLM's services and contributions to the advancement of Laboratory Medicine is widely recognised. This remarkable success in building, expanding, and promoting laboratory medicine is largely attributable to the voluntary service, dedication, and time generously contributed by more than 200 laboratory professionals from member societies, working voluntarily across the various EFLM Functional Units. I extend my sincere gratitude to the EFLM officers and member societies for their continuous support, loyalty, and invaluable contributions, which have enabled the successful completion of numerous EFLM tasks and projects. My heartfelt thanks also go to the members of the EFLM Executive Board and the EFLM Office for their exceptional commitment, enthusiasm, and efficiency in managing the demanding daily operations of the Federation.
I now confidently pass the torch of EFLM leadership to my successors, who will guide our Federation through new challenges and towards future achievements.
Below, I briefly highlight some of the key EFLM activities, achievements, and projects that were established and developed during my two-year term as EFLM President (2022–2023).

3RD EFLM STRATEGIC CONFERENCE

The 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference entitled "SMART and GREEN LABORATORIES. How to implement IVDR, Emerging Technologies and Sustainable Practices in Medical Laboratories" was held from 25th to 27th May 2022.
The Conference aimed to address recent developments and challenges in Laboratory Medicine with a strategic focus on areas requiring targeted actions and measures. An inspiring and high-level scientific programme was developed, featuring innovative topics and newly invited expert speakers and session chairs. The Conference led to the establishment of several EFLM Task Forces and Working Groups aligned with its key themes, as well as the development of EFLM Strategic Action Plans for 2022–2023.
More than 1,000 scientists, including 60 speakers and session chairs, participated in the Conference. Despite being held online due to the pandemic, the programme was highly interactive and encouraged strategic thinking, focusing on current challenges, future goals, priorities, and practical implementation of innovative solutions. Distinguished experts and opinion leaders from laboratory medicine, the in vitro diagnostics (IVD) industry, digital health, medical devices, and MedTech Europe contributed insights into the latest scientific and technological advances. A dedicated expert panel emphasised the importance of collaboration between industry, public, private, and academic sectors in driving innovation and shaping the future of the profession.
The scientific contributions presented at the Conference were subsequently published in a special issue of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM).

EFLM STRATEGIC ACTION PLANS 2022-2023

I firmly believe that progress in healthcare through Laboratory Medicine depends on the active engagement of EFLM National Societies and EFLM Functional Units. Accordingly, the Strategic Action Plans following the 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference were developed through extensive consultation with the EFLM Executive Board, Functional Units, and National Societies, taking into account their suggestions, comments, and constructive feedback.

Following thorough discussion, the EFLM Executive Board approved the final Strategic Action Plans for 2022–2023, which were subsequently shared with the EFLM Functional Units and member societies.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all those involved in the development of the EFLM Strategic Action Plans. Their collective commitment and contributions were essential in guiding our profession towards the objectives set out in the 2022–2023 implementation period.

The EFLM Strategic Action Plans comprised four main sections, covering a total of 29 items:

- **Structure and Organisation** (6 items)
- **Relations with Other Organisations** (9 items)
- **Profession, Education and Training, and Communication** (9 items)
- **Scientific Affairs** (5 items)

NEW EFLM FUNCTIONAL UNITS ESTABLISHED IN 2022-2023

1. **Task Force:** Green and Sustainable Laboratories (TF-GSL)
2. **Task Force**: Preparation of Labs for Emergencies (TF-PLE)
3. **Task Force**: Direct-to-Consumer Testing (TF-DTCT)
4. **Task Force**: EFLM Continuing Professional Education Credit System for the Accreditation of Continuing Education Events (TF-EFLM CPECS®)
5. **Task Group**: Integrated Diagnostics – a New Interdisciplinary Frontier
6. **Task Group**: Young Scientists
7. **Task Group**: Practical Guide to Implement Measurement Uncertainty in Laboratory Medicine
8. **Task Group**: Chronic Kidney Disease
9. **Task Group**: European Lab Day
10. **Task & Finish Group**: Biomarkers of Diagnosis and Follow-up of Nitrous Oxide Abuse
11. **Working Group**: Artificial Intelligence (WG-AI)
12. **Working Group**: Biomarkers of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)
13. **Working Group**: Harmonisation
14. **Working Group**: Postanalytical Phase
15. **Working Group**: Test Evaluation
16. **Working Group**: Distance Education and e-Learning
17. **Working Group**: Ethics

NEW CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN EFLM FOR IVD COMPANIES

IVD companies play a crucial role in advancing Laboratory Medicine. Establishing structured and transparent collaboration with these stakeholders is therefore essential to align decision-making processes and strengthen communication between industry and laboratory professionals.

In this context, I proposed to the EFLM Executive Board the introduction of a new Corporate Membership (CM) status. The proposal was thoroughly discussed and unanimously approved by the EFLM Executive Board during its meeting in Rome on 21 May 2023, recognising it as an important opportunity to establish direct and effective communication channels with the IVD industry.

The proposal was subsequently submitted to an extraordinary meeting of the EFLM General Meeting, held on 7 September 2023, with the participation of 35 Full National Society Members and 3 Affiliate National Society Members (with observer status). The General Meeting unanimously approved the introduction of the Corporate Membership status and the corresponding amendments to the EFLM Articles of Association.

Following the approval, a call for applications was launched for IVD companies active in Laboratory Medicine. Applications were evaluated by the EFLM Executive Board and submitted to the extraordinary EFLM General Meeting on 23 November 2023, which approved the Corporate Membership applications. I extend my congratulations to the IVD companies that have achieved EFLM Corporate Membership status.

AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER FEDERATIONS

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the European Society of Radiology (ESR) and EFLM was renewed and signed by the Presidents of both organisations on 23 October 2023.
- A new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF) and EFLM was signed on November 7, 2023 by the Presidents of BCLF and EFLM which is set to remain valid for three years, concluding on December 31, 2026.

COFFEE WITH THE EFLM PRESIDENT

Interviews with EFLM National Society Presidents and Representatives were published in the EFLM Newsletter under the section "Coffee with the President." This initiative aimed to highlight distinguished EFLM colleagues and their societies, allowing the wider EFLM community to become better acquainted with their work and achievements.

I conclude by extending my warmest wishes for the New Year, wishing you happiness, health, peace, and prosperity.

Yours sincerely.
Tomris Ozben
EFLM President-elect (2020-2021), President (2022-2023), Past-President (2024-2025)

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THE EFLM EXECUTIVE BOARD INFORMS

The EFLM Young Laboratory Medicine Professional Award

Reported by **Snezana Jovicic**, EFLM Executive Board Secretary

The EFLM Young Laboratory Medicine Professional Award aims to promote excellence and honor an extraordinary Young Scientist, who has made a substantial contribution to education or obtained a scientific achievement in Laboratory Medicine in Europe.

The young scientist (< 40 years of age) must be a leading author or editor or chair of an project within the past 5 years (eligible are various high quality educational materials, like educational papers, handbooks, books or book chapters, online educational resources, educational courses, workshops or webinars) OR a first author or corresponding author of a scientific publication within the past 5 years (original research article or review article) in an internationally recognized scientific journal (indexed in WoS) with an impact factor. Other scientific outputs, such as patents, can be also considered where a substantial effort of the individual is declared.

EFLM Full Members National Societies are invited to send nominations!

The nominated individual must be member of a NS/Association Full Member of EFLM as well as a member of the EFLM Academy at the time of the nomination. Applications and all supporting documents must be written in English and submitted electronically to the EFLM Office.

APPLICATIONS WILL BE EVALUATED BY AN AWARD COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF 3 EFLM OFFICERS ACCORDING TO ESTABLISHED CRITERIA (KNOW MORE)

The award winner will receive a trophy and, as a token of appreciation, the free registration to the EFLM Strategic Conference in Prague where the award is presented, including the coverage of the travel (economy fare) and reasonable accommodation expenses to attend the event.

DEADLINE TO APPLY: 15 MARCH 2026

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE LEAFLET.

EFLM OFFICE INFORMS

EFLMLabX Bursaries are open – Apply by 15 March 2026

Reported by **Silvia Terragni**, EFLM Office

EFLM is pleased to announce the availability of 10 EFLMLabX bursaries to support laboratory professionals seeking high-quality training opportunities across Europe.

The bursary will cover travel, accommodation, and a daily allowance during the training, up to a maximum of EUR 1,500. This opportunity is open exclusively to EFLM Academy Members, who are in good standing with their 2026 annual fee and affiliated with an EFLM National Society. Priority will be given to applicants from Vic Blaton countries.

Do not miss this opportunity to advance your professional training through EFLMLabX with EFLM support!

HOW TO APPLY
send the application form
to eflm@eflm.eu within **15 March 2026**

DOCUMENTS TO ATTACH TO THE APPLICATION:

1. Proof of membership in an EFLM National Society
2. EFLM Academy certificate for 2026
3. Support letter from your Dept or Lab head
4. Acceptance letter from the hosting EFLMLabX institution

CLICK HERE TO SEE THE CRITERIA
FOR EVALUATION OF BURSARIES' APPLICATIONS

EFLM OFFICE INFORMS

Call for Vacancies: several open positions are available in EFLM Committees!

Reported by **Alessia Carere**, EFLM Office

With the beginning of a new year full of fresh projects and activities, we are happy to remind you the open positions within EFLM functional units and warmly invite you to visit the dedicated page to obtain detailed information

https://www.eflm.eu/site/EFLM-open-positions

Available positions are:

Division "Science: Value-Based Laboratory Medicine"

Committee "Laboratory Error Database" (C-LED)	1 Full Member
Committee "Biological Variation" (C-BV)	1 Full Member
Committee "Direct-to-Consumer Testing and Patient Empowerment" (C-DTCT-PE)	1 Young Scientist Member
Committee "Chronic Kidney Disease" (C-CKD)	1 Full Member

Division "Education & Profession"

Division "Education & Profession"	1 Executive Committee Member
Committee "CPECS" (C-CPECS)	1 Young Scientist Member
Committee "Ethics in Laboratory Medicine" (C-E)	1 Full Member

Click on the link above to know more about the requirements and the evaluation procedure. The term of office will be for 2 years. The position could be renewable for other two more terms if the work for the Committee is deemed essential at that time. The work is mainly conducted by e-mail and teleconferencing, the Committee usually meets once per year. Procedure for applications: each National Societies Full Member of EFLM can submit one nomination using the dedicated form to be sent back to eflm@eflm.eu. A brief plan of the applicant's contribution to the aims and objectives of the relevant Committee must be included in the form. Candidates must be officially recommended by their National Society through a formal letter of support. Applicants who are not selected as full members may be eligible for corresponding membership.

We hope to receive many expressions of interests from EFLM National Societies!

EFLM OFFICE INFORMS

Changing of the Guard in EFLM National Societies

Reported by EFLM Office

A warm welcome to the incoming National Society officers and sincere thanks to the outgoing EFLM National Representatives and National Society Presidents for their support of EFLM activities during their terms of office.

SIBioC - Laboratory Medicine (The Italian Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Clinical Molecular Biology)

We are glad to inform that Sabrina Buoro (Regional Coordination Centre of Laboratory Medicine, Milan, Italy) is the new President of SIBioC, replacing Marcello Ciaccio. Furthermore, Tommaso Trenti (Dept. of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology University-Hospital of Modena, Modena, Italy) is the new EFLM National Representative for SIBioC, replacing Anna Carobene.

Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEMEDLAB)

We are glad to inform that Pastora Rodríguez (Complexo Hospitalario Universitario A Coruña – CHUAC, Spain) is the new President of the Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine, replacing Antonio Buño Soto.

Reflection on My Mandate as Chair of the Committee Young Scientists (2024–2025)

Reported by **Aleš Kvasnička**, Past Chair of the Committee Young Scientists

This column reflects on the period from 2024 to 2025, during which I had the privilege of serving as Chair of the EFLM Committee Young Scientists (C-YS). It was truly an honour to take over the chairmanship from Miron Sopic, whose inspiring leadership laid a strong foundation for the Committee's continued growth and development. His commitment and vision created the conditions for the C-YS to thrive, and I am grateful for the opportunity to build upon his work.

At the beginning of my mandate, I set out with a clear objective: to strengthen connections among young professionals in laboratory medicine and to provide an accessible platform for sharing news, experiences, opportunities, and concerns. To support more flexible and dynamic communication, we established a WhatsApp group for Committee members, which quickly grew to more than 60 active participants. This channel proved highly effective, facilitating discussions on a wide range of topics, from everyday laboratory challenges to opportunities, such as the EFLM LabX exchange programme and bursaries.

In parallel, we organised regular online meetings to exchange ideas and gather input from the community. To date, we have conducted and recorded eight such meetings, which were made available to members via the EFLM YouTube channel as private recordings. Together, these activities significantly strengthened our sense of community and created a robust platform on which future initiatives can continue to build.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the outstanding colleagues who served as Core Members of the C-YS during my mandate: Tara Rolic, Aleksei Tikhonov, Emeline Gernez, and Monica Dugaesescu. This highly motivated and enthusiastic group brought forward innovative ideas and a shared vision that greatly advanced the Committee's activities. Their independent engagement helped to reinforce the role of young scientists across numerous EFLM initiatives, including EuLabDay, EFLM LabX, and the promotion of EFLM and the C-YS at international congresses.

Notable examples include the EFLM C-YS Meets Young Scientists from Balkan Countries session at the 32nd Meeting of the Federation of Balkan Clinical Laboratories and the 16th National Conference of the Romanian Association of Laboratory Medicine, as well as our international session "Laboratory Medicine Across Continents" at the BiomedJ Conference in Paris in May 2025. Promoting EFLM and highlighting the opportunities available to young professionals have been central pillars of my mandate.

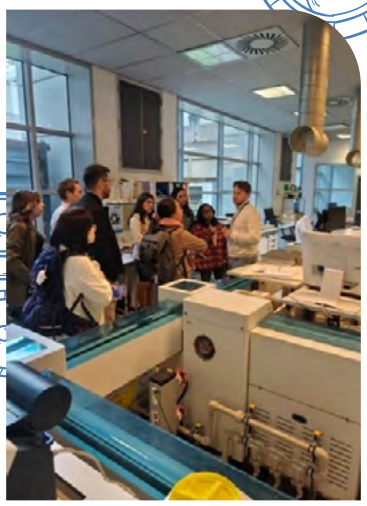
During this time, we also strengthened cooperation with the IFCC Task Force–Young Scientists and with young scientist groups from European national societies. Furthermore, we initiated discussions with the African Federation of Clinical Chemistry (AFCC) Young Scientists, with the hope that these exchanges will evolve into meaningful and productive collaborations in the years ahead. The C-YS played a key role in coordinating and supporting young scientist engagement at both international and national events, reinforcing the visibility and impact of our community.

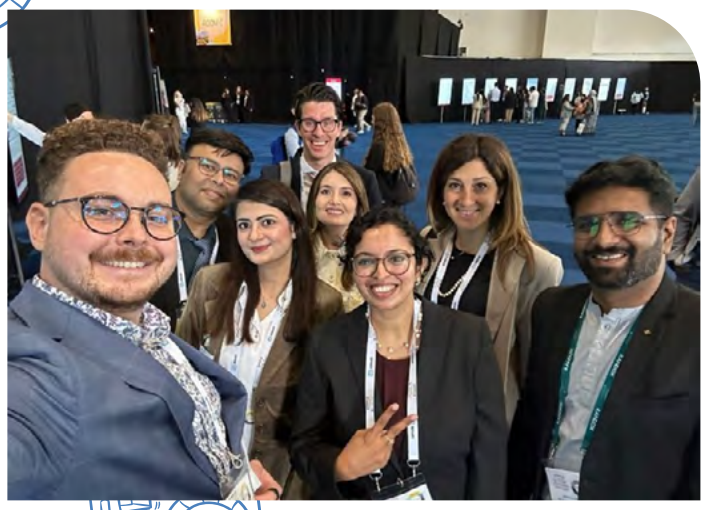
A defining achievement of my mandate was the strong and visible involvement of the EFLM Committee Young Scientists in shaping and delivering the Young Scientists activities at IFCC–EFLM EuroMedLab 2025 in Brussels. In close collaboration with the IFCC Task Force on Young Scientists, we co-organised the Young Scientists Forum and introduced, for the first time, a dedicated Young Scientists Poster Walk session. This new format provided an interactive and supportive environment in which early-career researchers could present and discuss their work with peers and mentors, fostering confidence, dialogue, and international collaboration. Together with leadership workshops, laboratory visits, scientific sessions, and networking and social events, these activities were designed "by young scientists for young scientists" and contributed to a strong sense of community and visibility at the congress. The success of these initiatives demonstrated the maturity and added value of the EFLM C-YS within the broader laboratory medicine community and established a benchmark for future EuroMedLab meetings, reinforcing the role of young scientists as essential contributors to the future of our profession.

Many individuals deserve heartfelt thanks for their guidance and support. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Mario Plebani for his unwavering encouragement during his presidency of EFLM. I am also grateful to Tomris Ozben for her strong support of young scientist–led initiatives during her time as Past President of EFLM and President of IFCC. Daniel Rajdl, Chair of the EFLM Division of Communication, has provided invaluable advice and continuous support—without which many of our achievements would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Damien Gruson, EFLM President-Elect, for offering opportunities and space for young scientist activities during EuroMedLab 2025. Numerous other colleagues and mentors have contributed to our success, and we are deeply thankful to all of them.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the entire EFLM community, both at the international and national levels, for its unconditional support. We are often reminded that young scientists represent the future of laboratory medicine, and we take this responsibility seriously. We will continue striving to advance knowledge in our field and to strengthen the visibility and value of laboratory medicine for patients and for medicine as a whole.

As I conclude my mandate, I am pleased to pass the baton to Monica Dugaesescu, who will lead the Committee Young Scientists for the next two-year term. I wish her every success and look forward to supporting her and the Committee in my role as Past Chair.



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THE EFLM LABORATORY EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

EFLM LABX CORNER

EFLMLabX Exchange Program Report

Reported by **Tuba Çakmak Ercan**, Turkiye,
EFLM bursary recipient

HOST INSTITUTION: Institute of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Diagnostics, First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University and General University Hospital, Prague (Czech Republic)
SUPERVISOR: Dr. Ivan Šebesta
TRAINING PERIOD: 17-30 November 2025

It was a great privilege to participate in the EFLMLabX exchange programme and to visit the Institute of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Diagnostics, First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University and General University Hospital, Prague, Czech Republic, between 17 and 30 November 2025.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Ivan Šebesta, MD, PhD, who supervised my visit and prepared a well-structured programme tailored to my professional interests. I am also grateful to Prof. Tomáš Zima, Head of the Institute, for welcoming me to the department and enabling this valuable educational opportunity. I would additionally like to thank Prof. Dr. Doğan Yücel, Head of the Turkish Biochemistry Society, for his continuous academic guidance and institutional support. I also sincerely acknowledge the EFLM LabX programme for providing an outstanding platform that promotes international collaboration and professional development in laboratory medicine.

I am currently working as a resident doctor in the Department of Medical Biochemistry at İzmir City Hospital, Turkey. My primary objectives for this exchange were to observe the organisation and workflow of a large academic laboratory abroad, to broaden my diagnostic perspective, and to gain experience in areas that are not routinely encountered in my current clinical practice.

During my two-week visit, I attended several diagnostic and academic activities covering both routine laboratory diagnostics and specialised fields. A major focus was placed on inborn errors of metabolism, with particular emphasis on purine metabolism disorders, their biochemical background, diagnostic approaches, and clinical relevance. These sessions significantly contributed to my understanding of metabolic diseases and their laboratory evaluation.

I also spent time in the gastroenterology laboratory, where I was introduced to diagnostic approaches for malabsorption syndromes and celiac disease, including the application and interpretation of breath tests. In addition, I had the opportunity to learn about national screening programmes in the Czech Republic, gaining insight into their structure, laboratory integration, and role in preventive medicine.

Throughout the programme, I observed laboratory practices and diagnostic strategies that differ from those routinely applied in Turkey. This exposure allowed me to gain new perspectives, practical insights, and experience in a different healthcare system, contributing positively to my professional development and future clinical practice.

Beyond the academic programme, my stay in Prague also offered valuable cultural experiences. I had the opportunity to explore the historical city centre, including walking across Charles Bridge, visiting Prague Castle, and discovering the Old Town. Experiencing the city's historical atmosphere and traditional Czech cuisine further enriched my stay.

In conclusion, this EFLMLabX exchange was an academically and professionally rewarding experience. It broadened my diagnostic knowledge, enhanced my understanding of international laboratory practice, and strengthened my motivation for continuous professional development. I am very grateful for this opportunity and sincerely thank everyone who contributed to making this visit possible.

NEWS FROM EFLM FUNCTIONAL UNITS

Four simple actions to be more sustainable and green in your laboratory!

Reported by **Tomris Ozben**, Chair of the EFLM Committee "Green & Sustainable Laboratories"

In line with the goal of the EFLM Committee "Green & Sustainable Laboratories", I have the pleasure to continue the column: Four simple actions to be more sustainable and green in your laboratory!

In each issue of the newsletter, we will select 4 actions from each section of the checklist prepared by the EFLM TF-GSL members (Chemicals, Energy, Waste and Water) to start implementing the daily routine in your laboratories and getting familiar with the checklist.

The below actions are accompanied by a graphical leaflet that you can download and post in the notice board of your laboratory to be shared with your colleagues (in this case, please remember to use recycled paper).

The selected actions of this issue are:

Section "Hazardous Chemicals Management"
ACTION: Can hazardous substances use be eliminated, substituted or reduced?

Section "Energy Management"
ACTION: Do you regularly change the filters that need changing, clean of the exposed refrigeration coils of refrigerators and freezers, and clean the door sealing?

Section "Waste Management"
ACTION: Did you purchase a Styrofoam compressor?

Section "Water Management"
ACTION: Do you set to stand-by mode or turn them off when not autoclaves / glass washers / water baths are not in use?

Click here to download the PDF

Achieving EFLM Green Labs accreditation

Reported by **Cerys March**, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust (UK)

October 2025

The NHS has promised to reach net zero for the emissions it controls by 2040. That's 14 years away. Furthermore, it has pledged an 80% reduction by 2032, which is 6 years away. My youngest child is 6, and it feels like the blink of an eye since he was born. I want to help the NHS achieve this goal so my son grows up in a world with an abundance of the insects he loves.

To that end I have appointed myself sustainability champion in the Blood Sciences Laboratory at the Royal Marsden Hospital (RMH). I have so far set up a green forum for them, and for all the labs across the RMH site, so that we can share ideas and sustainable initiatives. I gave a CPD talk on this topic to the whole of pathology and signed us up to the International Freezer Challenge. It was, and continues to be, a challenge to put myself out there and stand up for my values but it is worth it.

One of the initiatives we decided to implement was to find a green labs accreditation scheme we could sign up to. Our main analyser manufacturer, QuidelOrtho, agreed to fund us if we could find the right scheme, so I completed an options appraisal to select this. We chose the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM) green labs accreditation.

The first thing I did was download the EFLM green labs checklist PDF, which is free to access. It is 15 pages of tick boxes like this, so pretty extensive:

n.	ACTION	Always OR already completed	Sometimes OR in progress	No OR Rarely; agree to be regular within 3 months	No plans to start within the next year	Not applicable
GENERAL						
1	Has your lab received higher management support to introduce sustainable practices?	✓				

These were split into four categories: Hazardous Chemicals Management, Energy Management, Waste Management and Water Management. Most of the questions were easy to answer, but there were a few that I needed more detail on. I spent time emailing estates about the way our energy is generated and how much it costs, I asked our cleaning contractor about the cleaning chemicals they use, and our transport coordinator about switching to electric vehicles. It turns out all the electricity used onsite at RMH is generated from our own CHP (combined heat and power), or from a renewable source during downtime, which was heartening. The CHP also supplies our heating system. The cleaning chemicals are being switched to eco-alternatives slowly, and transport have a plan to replace all their vehicles with electric on a rolling basis.

We are a small laboratory, on three sites, and I answered the questions on the basis of all three labs together. We don't run any ultra-low temperature freezers, autoclaves or water-cooled equipment so I answered those as 'Already completed' if a 'Not applicable' option was not available. This was necessary, as otherwise we did not meet the required 75% success criteria for each section. I am aware that the checklist is being updated currently, so these questions will have an N/A option soon.

Once I was satisfied that I had answered all the questions on the PDF, I registered the laboratory on the EFLM website:

https://greenlabs.eflm.eu/certification

This took me to a form to fill in details on the size and workforce within the lab, and a page for each section of the checklist. Each question has a drop-down box to answer, but this did not take long since I had already answered them all on the PDF

In order to move on to the next section, a photo detailing one of the questions we answered as 'Always or Already completed' was uploaded. You could also add notes on any answers that were ticked in the right-hand columns e.g. No plans to start in the next year.

One of my photos was of this flask which is now filled with 'bath beads' instead of water and is given out to wards who request a cryoglobulin screen. It is kept in the incubator when not in use. The beads keep the temperature at 37°C for longer than water, are less likely to become contaminated (and can be sterilised) and make the flask easier and safer for the ward staff to use. I uploaded this photo for question 10 in water management:

> 10. Do you use a waterless water bath or a bead bath as an alternative to a traditional water bath to reduce water use, energy use and bacteria growth?

Once all four sections have been completed, you are immediately told whether you have achieved the 75% success criteria. If not, you have 3 months to improve before you can apply again. If you have achieved this, you are informed that you will receive an email outcome very soon. They check your notes and photos, and then if successful you are asked to pay through a secure portal. We paid and then received confirmation of accreditation that day, along with our certificate.

This is valid for 2 years and is proudly displayed in the lab. All in all, the process took a few months due to all the communication required, but the actual form completion took an hour or so once the data was gathered. The EFLM say that random audits will be carried out in some laboratories. I'm now looking forward to trying to improve those areas that the checklist has made me think about in more detail – it's a great tool if you want to make a start on being greener.

If this has inspired you to get started my top 3 tips are:

1. Look up the International Freezer Challenge:

2. Turn off all non-essential computers at night/over the weekend

3. Make Christmas decorations out of packaging like our talented BMS did last year for our entry to the Trust Christmas decoration competition:

PAST EFLM EVENTS

Past EFLM webinars on demand

Reported by Aleš Kvasnička, member of the EFLM Committee: Promotion & Publications

Clinical use of E2 and TESTO and the significance of their low values, measured by LC-MS

DATE: Webinar 2025
SPEAKER: Annemieke Heijboer (Netherlands)

This 2025 webinar addressed the clinical application of estradiol (E2) and testosterone (TESTO), emphasizing the importance of accurately assessing low hormone concentrations using liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry (LC-MS). The presentation explored the advantages of mass spectrometry over immunoassays, particularly in terms of sensitivity and specificity, and highlighted common limitations associated with immunoassay-based measurements. By reviewing these methodological considerations, the session guided participants in selecting the most appropriate analytical techniques for reliable steroid hormone diagnostics in clinical settings.

Analysis of Circulating DNA and Clinical Utility in Cancer: A Perspective from the Clinical Laboratory

DATE: Webinar 2025
SPEAKER: Angel Díaz-Lagares (Spain)

This webinar, held in 2025, provided a clinical laboratory perspective on the analysis of circulating DNA and its utility in cancer management. The speaker reviewed key preanalytical and analytical factors that influence the quality and reliability of circulating DNA testing, alongside an overview of current methodologies used in oncology. Clinical applications were illustrated with a focus on result interpretation and reporting, highlighting how circulating DNA analysis supports diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment monitoring in cancer patients.

7th EFLM Conference on Preanalytical Phase - New insights in preanalytical quality

DATE: 12-13 December 2025
Only PDF versions of the presentations are available.

The 7th edition of the EFLM Conference on Preanalytical Phase is focused on the improvement of the preanalytical phase through innovation and sustainable solutions. The program has been tailored by the scientific committee to update the knowledge in the field and to create an open forum for interactive discussion. The guiding principle of this conference is to be different, pragmatic, practical and interactive, to address some most common preanalytical challenges, raise questions and offer answers and solutions.

Leading international scientists and professionals gather in Padova to shape the future of the Preanalytical Phase: A report from the 7th EFLM Conference on the Preanalytical Phase

Reported by **Aleš Kvasnička**, Member of the EFLM Committee: Promotion & Publications

The 7th Conference on the Preanalytical Phase, organised by the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM), took place in December 2025 and once again highlighted the pivotal role of preanalytics in quality, patient safety and sustainability in laboratory medicine. Under the distinguished chairmanship of Prof. Mario Plebani, the Organizing and Scientific Committee brought together leading experts, young researchers and industry representatives from across Europe and beyond, offering a rich and highly focused scientific programme.

The strong relevance of the conference was reflected in the exceptional level of participation. A total of 545 registrations were recorded, making it necessary to close registration already one month before the meeting. Delegates came from more than 50 countries worldwide, including not only many European nations but also the United States, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, India, South Africa, South Korea, Mexico, and Bangladesh. This broad and diverse attendance clearly demonstrated that the event extended well beyond a European framework, confirming the EFLM Conference on the Preanalytical Phase as a truly international scientific forum.

The conference was opened by Mario Plebani, who emphasised that the preanalytical phase remains the most vulnerable part of the total testing process and requires continuous attention, innovation and shared responsibility. The opening session, dedicated to sustainability in preanalytics, featured Sheri Scott, who discussed strategies for a greener and more sustainable preanalytical workflow, and Ana-Maria Simundic, who addressed how laboratories can minimise patient blood loss through improved test requesting and sampling practices. Michael Cornes further demonstrated how good patient blood management positively impacts costs, patient outcomes and environmental sustainability. Digitalisation and artificial intelligence were central themes throughout the first day. Giuseppe Lippi highlighted the clinical and economic burden of preanalytical errors, while Andrea Padoan presented current and future applications of digital tools and AI to reduce variability and errors in the preanalytical phase. Earlier, Mario Plebani highlighted the importance of the value-based laboratory medicine, linking preanalytical quality directly to patient-centred outcomes.

Practical aspects of preanalytics were addressed in sessions on sample transport, identification and blood collection. Janne Cadamuro discussed the benefits and risks of pneumatic tube systems, while Pieter Vermeersch focused on patient and sample identification and the importance of accurate documentation of blood collection time. The role of AI in real-life preanalytical use cases was further illustrated by Hikmet Can Çubukçu.

A dedicated session explored alternatives to classical venous blood collection. Alvaro González presented the benefits and challenges of self-sampling, while Mads Nybo offered a forward-looking perspective on robotic phlebotomy and future blood collection technologies. Gian Luca Salvagno addressed preanalytical challenges associated with decentralised laboratory testing and point-of-care environments.

The conference also recognised excellence in research through awards for the best selected abstracts. Awarded studies included work by Eric Olson (USA) on automation to reduce errors in sample preparation, Min Yu (USA) on patient identification errors in point-of-care glucose testing, and Guillaume Grzych (France) on innovative approaches to studying glucose and lactate stability in whole blood.

Industry-sponsored parallel workshops provided valuable practical insights. A workshop organised by Werfen focused on haemolysis in blood gas analysis, with presentations by Gian Luca Salvagno and Laura Pighi (Italy), including validation data for the GEM Premier 7000 system. The EOS workshop addressed total preanalytical automation, featuring contributions from Giuseppe Lippi, Anna Carobene (Italy) and Antonio Antico (Italy), and highlighting the role of AI, data integration and automation in improving clinical outcomes. A third workshop, organised by Beckman Coulter, explored how closer collaboration between industry and laboratories can overcome preanalytical barriers, with talks by Tommaso Fasano (Italy) and Thomas Coulson (UK).

The second day of the conference addressed preanalytical challenges from past to present. Sean Costelloe discussed strategies to close the gap on haemolysis, while Rosanna Falbo (Italy) focused on urine collection. Alexander von Meyer examined sample stability study design and reporting, and Enrico Iaccino (Italy) reviewed preanalytical variables in liquid biopsy. Interactive sessions and roundtables, including discussions on anti-doping testing and closer collaboration between laboratories and clinicians, fostered lively debate and knowledge exchange.

In conclusion, the 7th EFLM Conference on the Preanalytical Phase delivered a comprehensive and highly relevant programme, combining scientific evidence, practical experience and innovation. By addressing sustainability, digitalisation, automation and emerging sampling strategies, the meeting reinforced the message that excellence in preanalytics is fundamental to patient safety, value-based healthcare and the future of laboratory medicine in Europe.

UPCOMING EFLM EVENTS

Shaping the future of Laboratory Medicine: what to expect at the EFLM Strategic Conference 2026

Reported by the EFLM Office

As April approaches, the EFLM Strategic Conference 2026 offers a key opportunity to reflect on how Laboratory Medicine can continue to evolve and strengthen its role within healthcare systems and society. Taking place on 24–25 April 2026 in Prague, the Conference will bring together experts, decision-makers and stakeholders to address the strategic priorities shaping the future of the profession.

The programme focuses on long-term vision and practical impact, exploring topics such as harmonisation in Laboratory Medicine, the integration of artificial intelligence and data analytics, collaboration with clinical disciplines and the development of future professionals. Through interactive sessions and expert-led discussions, participants will examine how innovation, policy and education can converge to enhance the value of laboratory diagnostics.

A strong emphasis is placed on dialogue and strategic thinking, encouraging active engagement between scientific leaders, EFLM functional units, and industry partners. The Conference aims to translate emerging concepts into actionable strategies that support quality, sustainability and patient-centred care.

Whether you plan to attend in person or join virtually, registration is open now. Fees vary depending on member status, age category and participation format, with online attendance options available that provide access to all live sessions and conference materials.

Why Attend?

This Conference is more than a scientific meeting. It's a strategic nexus where science meets policy, innovation, and professional development. It's an opportunity to:

- Connect with leaders in laboratory medicine
- Engage in shaping the future of diagnostics and healthcare delivery
- Discover emerging trends and technologies that will define the field
- Participate in structured strategic discussions and planning

We look forward to welcoming colleagues from around the world to Prague this April to inspire collaboration and advance the impact of laboratory medicine on society.

For more information and to register, visit the official conference website:

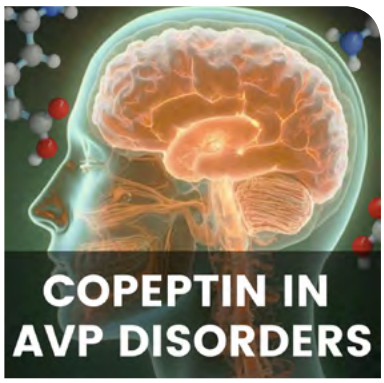
https://www.eflm-strategic-conference2026.cz/

UPCOMING EFLM EVENTS

Forthcoming EFLM webinars

Reported by Aleš Kvasnička, member of the EFLM Committee: Promotion & Publications

Do not miss excellent forthcoming webinars, free and available for EFLM Academy members at the EFLM e-learning platform!



The role of copeptin in the investigation of AVP disorders

Date: 27th January 2026 at 18:00 (Brussels local time).
Speaker: Chris Boot (UK)

A call for action toward harmonization in laboratory medicine

Date: 10th February 2026 at 18:00 (Brussels local time).
Speakers: Luisa Agnello (Italy), Leila Akhvlediani (Georgia), Lora Dukic (Croatia).

Enhancing Risk Assessment Using Analytical Performance Insights

Date: 24th February 2026 at 18:00 (Brussels local time).
Speaker: Leonor Guiñón (Spain).

Twenty Fifth Annual Prof. dr Ivan Berkeš Conference

Report for 2025 from Society of Medical Biochemist of Serbia
Prepared by **Ass. Prof. Neda Milinković**

The Twenty Fifth Annual Scientific Conference »Professor Ivan Berkeš« was held in 2025 in memory and gratitude to Professor Ivan Berkeš, who founded medical biochemistry and established it as a scientific and health discipline in Serbia. This Conference was organized traditionally by Society of Medical Biochemist of Serbia, and this year was co-organized and hosted by the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade. This traditional meeting of students and Professors of the Faculty of Pharmacy, honoring the legacy of one of its most distinguished professors was held on 11. December 2025. Prof. Dr. Nada Majkić-Singh, with her opening words greeted the participants and reminded us of the history, the idea of Scientific Foundation »Professor Ivan Berkeš«, and the significance of the Conference, as well as of the life and work of the Professor Ivan Berkeš, whom it honors.

This year, coordinators of the Conference were Prof. Dr Nada Majkić-Singh and Assistant Prof. Dr Neda Milinković. After opening address of Prof. Dr Nada Majkić-Singh, following the welcoming address of the Vice Dean for Teaching of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Prof. Dr Jelena Đuriš, the Found President Prof. Dr Nada Majkić-Singh, presented awards of the Foundation. Diplomas and money awards were traditionally presented by the Scientific Fund »Dr Ivan Berkeš« to the best students of the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade, and this year's recipients were Marko Ivanković (Master of Pharmacy-Medical Biochemist) and Uroš Sretenović (Master of Pharmacy).

The scientific program was completed by five lectures held by doctors of medical sciences-pharmacy, who defended their doctoral theses or other scientific investigation in the previous years, and one Specialist of Medical Biochemistry. The topics of the lectures were precisely from the topics of their research.

The first lecture titled "The importance of oxidative stress and the kynurenine pathway of tryptophan metabolism in the onset and development of multiple sclerosis in the population of Serbia" was presented by Marija Vasić who received her doctorate at the Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade. Second lecture titled "Cholesterol synthesis and absorption markers and sphingolipid profile in preeclampsia" was presented by Tamara Antonić who received her doctorate Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade. Third lecture titled "Inflammatory markers and qualitative and quantitative high-density lipoprotein particle characterization in preeclampsia risk assessment" was presented by Gorica Marković who received her doctorate at the Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade. Fourth lecture titled "The influence of methionine sulfoxide reductase A on the occurrence of COPD" was held by Vera Milovanović who received her doctorate Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade. The final lecture was held by Slađana Menković, EuSpLM, from research from her specialist medical study titled "Significance of glycoalbumin determination in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus", Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade.

The continuity of this conference is based on respect for the past, but also on the awareness that young and new PhDs of the Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Serbia are the pillars of the future of pharmaceutical and medical laboratory science in Serbia. This is exactly a confirmation that science and the profession are closely connected, which also strengthens their quality.

Uroš Sretenović receiving Fund Award

Marko Ivanković receiving Fund Award

Chairpersons at the opening of the conference: Prof. Dr Nada Majkić-Singh and Ass. Prof. Dr Neda Milinković

Prof. Dr Jelena Đuriš, Uroš Sretenović, Prof. Dr Nada Majkić-Singh, Marko Ivanković, Ass. Prof. Dr Neda Milinković

Uroš Sretenović, Dr Tamara Antonić, Dr Gorica Marković, Prof. Dr Nada Majkić-Singh, Slađana Menković, Ass. Prof. Dr Neda Milinković, Marko Ivanković, Dr Vera Milovanović

NEWS FROM EFLM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEMEDLAB) held the course "Microbiota and Autoimmune Diseases" as part of its virtual training project, SEMEDLAB Academy.

The Clinical Laboratory, Key to Addressing Autoimmune Diseases: It Allows for Adjusting Treatments, Minimizing Inflammatory Flare-ups and Side Effects

- **Autoimmune diseases arise as a consequence of a dynamic imbalance between genetic predisposition and environmental exposures, with the microbiome as a key mediator of this interaction.**
- **The use of probiotics or fecal microbiota transplants could contribute to restoring microbial balance and modulating the immune response, offering new opportunities in the prevention and treatment of autoimmune diseases.**

Autoimmune diseases arise as a result of a complex interaction between genetic and environmental factors that disrupts the mechanisms of immunological tolerance, in which the microbiome acts as a key mediator. Thus, microbial imbalance or dysbiosis has been associated with various autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, systemic lupus erythematosus, multiple sclerosis, spondyloarthritis, and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

In this context, the Immunology Committee and the Microbiology Committee of the Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEMEDLAB) held the conference "Microbiota and Autoimmune Diseases" as part of their virtual training project, SEMEDLAB Academy. The participating experts addressed the relationship between microbiota, immunity, chronic inflammation, and neurodegenerative, renal, and rheumatological diseases. They also discussed the central role of Laboratory Medicine in managing diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, by contributing decisively to early diagnosis, risk stratification, and disease monitoring.

In the words of Dr. Antonio Fernández Suárez, president of the Immunology Committee of SEMEDLAB, the collaboration between the Society's Microbiology and Immunology committees was essential in the design and development of this course, since, as he points out, this field represents a natural point of convergence between both disciplines. "While Microbiology provides knowledge about the composition, dynamics, and functions of the microbiome in different mucous membranes, Immunology provides the conceptual framework for understanding how these microbial communities modulate the immune response and the mechanisms of tolerance and autoimmunity." Together, the coordinated work between these disciplines "reflects the biological reality of autoimmune diseases and contributes to an integrated and up-to-date view of the microbiome as a central element of the pathological process."

Gut Microbiota: A Modulator of the Immune System

The gut microbiota plays a fundamental role as a modulator of the immune system, influencing the maturation and function of regulatory T lymphocytes (Tregs), antigen-presenting cells, and other immune cells, thus contributing to maintaining immunological tolerance. This was explained by Dr. Tomás García Lozano, president of the Microbiology Commission of SEMEDLAB, who showed that a balanced microbiota "maintains the immune system in a state of homeostasis and tolerance to the body's own tissues."

Conversely, as the doctor indicated, when there is a microbial imbalance (dysbiosis), "this regulation is altered and has been associated with various autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, systemic lupus erythematosus, multiple sclerosis, spondyloarthritis, and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)." The findings in these pathologies, as Dr. García Lozano emphasizes, show that intestinal dysbiosis can not only act as a trigger for autoimmunity, "but also as a potential therapeutic target, where probiotics, prebiotics, specific diets, targeted antibiotics, or fecal microbiota transplants could contribute to restoring microbial balance and modulating the immune response, offering new opportunities in the prevention and treatment of autoimmune diseases."

Also, in collaboration with Dr. Francisco Rodríguez Peña, the SEMEDLAB Academy course "Microbiota and Autoimmune Diseases," explored the main mechanisms of action of the microbiota, the interaction of the intestinal microbiota with the nervous system, and the internal and external factors that contribute to promoting or destabilizing its balance, protecting the individual or predisposing them to the development of a neurodegenerative disease.

In addition, Dr. María Rodríguez García delved into the "gut-kidney axis" in the presence of chronic kidney disease and the production of intestinal metabolites. Among these, uremic toxins, such as indoxyl sulfate and p-cresyl sulfate, stand out. These toxins accumulate due to reduced renal elimination, promoting inflammation and oxidative stress, which contributes to vascular damage and disease progression. This relationship can be bidirectional, opening the door to future interventions to modulate it (diet, prebiotics, probiotics, synbiotics, and various strategies to reduce toxins).

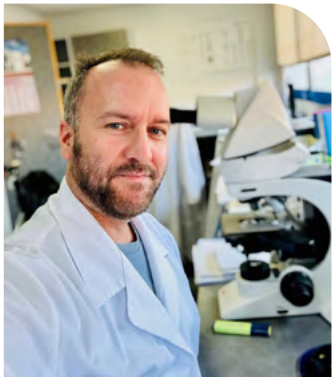
The laboratory, crucial in the approach to rheumatoid arthritis

The course also addressed the central role of the Clinical Laboratory in the therapeutic management of rheumatoid arthritis. As Dr. Fernández Suárez emphasized, the detection of specific autoantibodies, such as rheumatoid factor and anti-citrullinated peptide antibodies, allows for the identification of the disease in its early stages and the prediction of its progression. "Likewise, monitoring systemic inflammatory markers, such as C-reactive protein and erythrocyte sedimentation rate, facilitates the objective evaluation of treatment response," he explains. More recently, the laboratory has also contributed to personalized medicine by analyzing biomarkers associated with therapeutic response and adverse effects.

The work of the Clinical Laboratory can significantly improve the prognosis and quality of life of patients with rheumatoid arthritis by optimizing treatment decisions and reducing the progression of joint damage. As Dr. Fernández Suárez states, "close analytical monitoring allows for early adjustment of immunomodulatory treatments, minimizing inflammatory flare-ups and side effects. Furthermore, the identification of biological profiles associated with greater disease aggressiveness facilitates earlier, more intensive interventions."

Regarding the microbiome, the physician emphasized that the characterization of dysbiosis states and indirect markers of intestinal permeability or mucosal inflammation could, in the future, help complement conventional therapeutic strategies. "Overall, the Clinical Laboratory acts as an integrating axis between diagnosis, monitoring, and personalized treatment, with a direct impact on disease control and patient well-being," summarized Dr. Fernández Suárez.

Antonio Fernández Suárez



Tomás García Lozano

International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine

IFCC News

Dear colleagues,

This is the first IFCC contribution to the EuroLab News for the new year and represents a valuable opportunity to reflect on the path behind us while looking ahead with renewed commitment. In the past year the IFCC has once again demonstrated the strength, diversity, and resilience of its global laboratory medicine community, united by a shared dedication to scientific excellence, professional development, innovation, and the continuous improvement of patient care.

Throughout the year, IFCC activities have continued to foster collaboration across regions, reinforcing strategic priorities. Our President, Prof. Tomris Ozben, through her extensive meetings and travels, has provided important opportunities to discuss strategic plans, review ongoing activities, and ensure continuity of IFCC's initiatives, while strengthening dialogue with our members and with our international partners. Such activity highlights the importance of knowledge exchange and collective action in addressing evolving healthcare challenges worldwide.

This issue also provides a moment for remembrance. Our community has suffered the loss of distinguished colleagues whose contributions have left a lasting impact. We respectfully honour the memory of Dr Mabel Charles-Davies from Nigeria, a highly respected leader and mentor who served laboratory medicine with unwavering dedication, particularly in advancing education and professional engagement. More recently, we were deeply saddened by the passing of Dr Osama Najjar, from Palestine, a valued member of the IFCC Executive Board, whose commitment, insight, and service significantly contributed to the work and vision of IFCC. Their absence will be profoundly felt, and we extend our sincere condolences to their families, friends, and colleagues.

Looking forward, a key upcoming initiative will be IFCC Global MedLab Week 2026, (IFCC GMLW 2026), from April 20 to 26, which will once again provide a powerful platform to highlight the essential role of medical laboratory professionals in healthcare systems worldwide. This year's theme is: "A Day at the Lab". We warmly encourage national societies, institutions, and professionals to actively participate and plan activities that will showcase excellence, innovation, and the impact of laboratory medicine on patient outcomes and public health.

I'm also glad to announce the upcoming 27th IFCC WorldLab Congress that will be held from 25 to 29 October 2026 in New Delhi, India, at the India International Convention & Expo Centre (IICC). WorldLab 2026 will be a dynamic forum for all laboratory medicine professionals: clinicians, researchers, scientists, industry partners and other stakeholders. During the congress, participants will share the latest advances in diagnostics, cutting-edge technologies and innovations that shape the future of Laboratory Medicine. Save the dates and join colleagues from around the globe in New Delhi, in the vibrant setting of one of the world's great capital cities.

As we move into the new year, we do so with gratitude for the dedication of our members and partners, and with confidence in our shared ability to advance laboratory medicine globally. We look forward to continued collaboration and wish you a successful year ahead.

Marilena Stamouli

Professor Mabel A. Charles-Davies
(1964-2025)

Doctor Osama Najjar
(1967-2026)

Calendar of EFLM events and events under EFLM auspices

Do not miss the opportunity to have your event listed here.
Apply for EFLM auspices!
For more information visit here or email eflm@eflm.eu

Labquality Days – International Congress on Quality in Laboratory Medicine and Health Technology 2026
Helsinki (FI), 5-6 February 2026

EFLM Webinar
A call for action toward Harmonisation in Laboratory Medicine
on-line, 10 February 2026

Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SEMEDLAB)
Alicante (ES), 19-20 February 2026

EFLM Webinar
Enhancing Risk Assessment using analytical performance insights
on-line, 24 February 2026

EFLM Webinar
Tumor markers; identifying pre-analytical, analytical and post-analytical challenges and opportunities to improve the clinical cancer care
on-line, 10 March 2026

The 10+2 Santorini Conference
Systems Medicine and Personalised Health and Therapy - The Odyssey from hope to practice: Patient first-Keep Ithaka always in your mind
Santorini (GR), 26-29 March 2026

NOxForum
Lille (FR), 30-31 March 2026

EFLM Webinar
Enhancing Internal and External Quality Control in Medical Laboratories Through the Bayesian Paradigm
on-line, 31 March 2026

EFLM Webinar
Bone forming agents in osteoporosis: to split them or to lump them
on-line, 7 April 2026

EFLM Strategic Conference 2026
Laboratory Medicine for Society
Prague (CZ), 24-25 April 2026

40th Nordic Congress in Clinical Biochemistry
Aarhus (DK), 15-18 September 2026

International XXIV Congress of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine
Belgrade (RS) 23-25 September 2026

EuroMedLab 2027
27th European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine
LABMEDUK27 of the Association for Laboratory Medicine
London (UK) 16-20 May 2027