National Society Meetings

14 national membership societies are affiliated to EACR, giving their members free EACR membership. We are pleased to feature short reports from some of our affiliated national societies’ meetings from the past year. The full reports can be found in the online version of this Yearbook.

1st Congress of the Portuguese Association for Cancer Research (ASPIC)
Lisbon, Portugal, 25-26 November 2014

The Portuguese Association for Cancer Research (ASPIC), had its first international Congress in November 2014.

The Congress attracted 249 participants, mostly from Portugal but also from Brazil, Spain and Mozambique. The delegates that completed the survey form heard about the conference through colleagues/speakers/organisers, highlighted the good organisation, the high level of invited speakers and the emphasis on multidisciplinarity and mix of clinical and basic research. The pre-congress meeting with patient associations and the words addressed by them to researchers at the closing session were highly appreciated.

Of particular interest was a symposium from ASPIC-ASEICA on new research approaches, with lectures by Manuel Serrano, Paula Soares and Goreti Sales. The high quality of this specific symposium was stressed by the participants. The possibility of joining forces between the Portuguese and Spanish cancer research associations, especially at difficult times, is hopefully to be continued on a long term basis.

Meeting of the Croatian Association for Cancer Research HDIR-3, From Bench to Clinic
Zagreb, Croatia, 6-7 November 2014

HDIR was established five years ago by Croatian members of EACR. The goal of the Association is to promote cancer research in Croatia and promote better connections with other countries, focussing on the cooperation between basic and clinical research in cancer, from bench to clinic. We had enthusiastic support from national societies from Italy, Serbia and Turkey.

The opening lecture on the first day was given by the plenary speaker Professor Richard Marais (UK), current president of the EACR. His excellent talk was dedicated to signalling in melanoma, from basic biology to clinical exploitation with more attention on BRAF and NRAS signalling, implicating targeted therapies and mechanisms of resistance, involving development of new technology platforms which will stratify selection of second-line therapies. The second plenary speaker was Professor Esteban Cvitkovic (France) who gave a personal critical overview on drug development for cancer treatment. A very brisk discussion was inspired by these perspectives.

The second day covered topics divided into four sections: Signal Transduction, Immunity and Cancer, Cancer Genetics and Epigenetics and New Therapies and Cancer Resistance, with seven invited speakers and seven short talks which were selected from the received abstracts.

2nd Anticancer Agents Congress
Mugla, Turkey, 23-25 April 2014

The Association for Molecular Cancer Research (MOKAD), Turkey, organised this Congress as a joint congress with 5th Multidisciplinary Cancer Research Congress. We hope this series will successfully continue in the years to come.

The focus of the congress was on different aspects of cancer stem cells, resistance to cancer therapy and development of novel compounds/approaches to overcome problems especially arising from therapy resistance. Participants from 20 countries shared their ideas about these topics in a friendly atmosphere. Overall, the congress consisted of 25 plenary or panel talks, 18 oral presentations and 76 poster presentations. One oral and one poster prize were awarded by the scientific committee under the sponsorship of EACR.

Overall, the congress was helpful in giving insight on the current concept of cancer stem cells and therapy resistance as well as the strategies to overcome these obstacles. We are hopeful and determined to organise such events and would be pleased to welcome an increasing number of participants at our next meeting. The feedback indicates that it was a successful and extremely useful meeting for young participants especially. Last but not least, we would like to thank EACR for their sponsorship.
Irish Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting
Galway, Ireland, 27-28 February 2014

The 2014 annual meeting of the Irish Association for Cancer Research was held in the Galway Bay Hotel, Salthill, Co. Galway over two full days. The mission of the Association is to foster basic and translational cancer research across the island of Ireland in collaboration with invited international experts in the field. Fostering the career development of young cancer researchers is also a high priority, and, to this end, the meeting always features several sessions dedicated to oral presentations from graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. A novel feature of this year’s programme was the inclusion of an industry-academia session, in which four academic cancer research scientists outlined their experiences of taking bench research into the start-up company arena.

Main accomplishments of conference

- For the first time the meeting incorporated a dedicated industry-academia session – how to translate from bench-based cancer research into the start-up company space. This was very well-received, and elicited a general consensus among junior researchers that they would be much more likely to engage with their institutional Technology Transfer Offices.
- The Irish Cancer Society keynote lecture, delivered by Prof. Yves Pommier (National Cancer Institute, USA), was highly interactive and has stimulated discussions about setting up a new student exchange programme between Ireland and the NCI.
- The two EACR awardees were Dr. Niamh Lynam Lennon from Trinity College Dublin and Dr. Triona Ni Chonghaile who just returned from the States and is now working in University College Dublin.
- A dedicated outreach coordinator, Dr. Olga Piskareva, was introduced to the members. Olga has been steadily increasing the profile of the IACR through social media sites.
- Multiple new translational research collaborations have been initiated following exposure of the audience to invited presentations describing the successful utilisation of cancer patient biobank material and related unique bioresources.
- A timely session on the use of patient-derived xenografts in cancer research has helped to raise awareness of this cutting-edge technology and how its utilisation could help position Irish cancer researchers at the forefront of the field.
- A complete overhaul of the IACR website, to coincide with the launch of the 2014 meeting, will allow us to publish all the submitted abstracts online (in process).
- Our first ever formal meeting survey, initiated by the outreach coordinator, has allowed us to predict topics of emerging interest for future conferences and has identified opportunities to help tailor future conferences to facilitate the career development of Irish researchers-in-training.
- Due to the small size of the meeting and its all-inclusive nature, interactions between national and international participants (at both junior and senior level) were excellent and have fostered new collaborations in addition to assisting in the training of junior researchers.

56th Annual Meeting of the Italian Cancer Society: “Dangerous Liaisons - translating cancer biology into better patients management”
Ferrara, Italy, 11-13 September 2014

The event was coordinated by Massimo Negrini, University of Ferrara, supported by the SIC President Silvia Giordano, SIC board and the local committee. About 400 people attended the meeting that comprised symposia, plenary lectures, poster presentation sessions.

Approximately 250 high-quality posters were presented at the meeting in poster display sessions. 28 posters were selected for poster discussion in dedicated sessions. Poster discussions were presented by young and promising scientists.

To acknowledge contribution in advancing Italian research against cancer many awards were assigned. Federica Turdo (National Cancer Institute, Milan) and Denise Pinessi (“Mario Negri” Institute, Milan) won the traditional “Piero Trivella” Award for the best poster presented at the meeting. The poster from Alessandra Dall’Acqua (CRO, Aviano PN) was awarded by EACR. The “Elena Cappannini” Award for the best 2013 publication was assigned to Andrea Morandi (University of Florence) and the “Pezzolli Foundation” scholarship was assigned to Tiziana Triulzi (National Cancer Institute, Milan).

The conference was preceded by a pre-meeting of SIC young investigators on “Writing Grant Proposals” (Valerie Matarese, Italy). The meeting ended by introducing the “EACR-AACR-SIC Special Conference: Anticancer Drug Action and Drug Resistance” that will be held in Florence, Italy, 20-23 June 2015.