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*Minutes*

*EASI Forum*

Dresden, October 28, 2017; 12:30 – 14:00 h

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**Participants:** Yehuda Shoenfeld (IL), Nicola Bizzaro (IT), Maria Orietta Borghi (IT), Xavier Bossuyt (BE), Jean-Luc Charuel (FR), Jan Damoiseaux (NL), Ulrike Demel (AT), Catharina Eriksson (SE), Felix Gastager (represents RU and UA), Ingmar Heijnen (CH), Manfred Herold (AT), Jörg Hofmann (AT), Werner Klotz (AT), Thorsten Krieger (DE), Liisa Kuhl (EST), Pier-Luigi Meroni (IT), Lucile Musset (FR), Antonella Radice (IT), Johan Rönnelid (SE), Maria José Sousa (PT), Markku Viander (FI)

**Thermo Fisher Scientific:** Nina Olschowka (Global Marketing AI)  
Teresa Araujo (PT), Martin Brandenburg (DE), Thomas Horn (AT), Emilie Le Floch (FR), Sigrid Sjolander (SE), Sune Sved (FI)

**Protocol:** Nina Olschowka

**Agenda**

1. Welcome – personal announcement from Yehuda
2. New EASI website – status
3. Topics for the EASI session at the International Congress on Autoimmunity in Lisbon in May 2018  
Do we want to initiate studies which could be presented in Lisbon?
4. How to proceed with the support of EASI in the accreditation in autoimmune diagnostic laboratories
5. Questionnaire on ANA and CCP/RF for Clinicians – status report from the working group
6. Update on the ANCA questionnaire for clinicians
7. APS project – status report from the working group
8. Belgian EASI questionnaires
9. EASI Publication
10. Different topics from the local EASI groups
11. Next EASI Forum meeting

**1. Welcome – personal announcement from Yehuda**

Yehuda Shoenfeld presents Jan Damoiseaux as the new president of EASI.

From now on, Yehuda will be the honorary president. He assures that he still will be available for any help. We all thank him for 11 years of a very fruitful chairmanship.

**2. New EASI website – status**

Unfortunately, the collaboration with Kenes did not proceed. Therefore, we will not work with “Autoimmunity Network” (because it is not a legal entity) but, instead, we agreed with Karsten Conrad that we will do the website with the help of GFID (Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Immundiagnostik e.V., the organizer of the bi-annual Dresden Symposium on Autoantibodies). Nina will send a draft for a contract and will follow up. We hope that things will go on smoothly now and we will have a new website at the end of the year.

**3. Topics for the EASI session at the International Congress on Autoimmunity in Lisbon in May 2018  
Do we initiate studies which could be presented in Lisbon?**

The topic agreed upon earlier is myositis. There was a general agreement that it is too late to do studies for showing results in half a year. However, Xavier, Yehuda and Lucile have announced that they each will have results from studies to show by then. Nina and Jan will compile a program of the EASI session, including contributions mentioned above and additional speakers.

**4. How to proceed with the support of EASI in the accreditation in autoimmune diagnostic laboratories?**

Nicola presents further steps in the support of autoimmunity labs for accreditation.

- EASI could help to “translate” the ISO 15081 norm into direct instructions with minimal requirements on autoantibody testing for the accreditation. Specific requirements are lacking today.

Pierluigi comments that exactly such recommendations, how to do AI in the immunological lab, are currently put together by EULAR. Therefore, EASI should concentrate more on “how to validate a test” and “how to meet the accreditation criteria”, “how to translate it into real life in the lab”.

Next steps: Ulrich Sack and Nicola will contact the EASI groups and ask for existing national recommendations and will put them together.

**5. Questionnaire on ANA and CCP/RF for Clinicians – status report from the working group**

In two countries (Austria, France) EASI has asked clinicians to fill in a respective questionnaire. Maria-José has analyzed the data and has produced a poster comparing the results. She will present her findings at the EASI session on this congress on Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>.

However, the working group does not recommend to do this questionnaire by other EASI groups, because it is not suitable for concluding recommendations or doing a reasonable follow-up. After long discussions, it was agreed in the group that a questionnaire is not the right tool for reaching out to clinicians. Instead, we want to search for existing guidelines for clinicians, in particular general practitioners and rheumatologists, how to deal with RA autoantibody tests (ANA, CRP, ESR may be part of this). The group wants to start with its own countries, involved in the working group (NL, AT, PT, FR). Additionally, the members of the working group will check their own lab info system – how do the respective clinicians ask for RF and CCP (and ANA, CRP, ESR)?

The roll-out to the other countries will be done in a second step. The group will reach out to the other EASI members.

**6. Questionnaire on ANCA for Clinicians**

Jan-Willem Cohen-Tervaert has moved to Canada. The last information was that he wants to wait with rolling out the finalized questionnaire until the new consensus recommendations on ANCA testing are published. Now that it is published, Nina will contact him and ask for further steps.

**7. APS project – status report from the working group**

On the last EASI Forum meeting, it was discussed that Ricard Cervera, Pier-Luigi Meroni and Vittorio Pengo could work together and discuss needs in this area which could be met by EASI. However, this collaboration didn't happen. Instead, Pier-Luigi presents the efforts of FIRMA (Italian equivalent to EASI) to collect samples by many APS centers to build up a sample collection. This sample collection with clinically well defined samples will help to understand what is really going on in the routine real life of APS testing. For the future, it could be a very valuable source for studies. The members of the EASI Forum showed their interest to collaborate. Pier-Luigi will send more information.

**8. Belgian EASI questionnaires**

As a follow-up of the EASI recommendations for ANA testing, the Belgian EASI group has done a questionnaire on ANA patterns, i.e. ICAP, for (i) Lab professionals who offer ANA tests (50 answers) and (ii) rheumatologists (40 answers). Xavier presents the results (presentation is attached). The members of the EASI Forum showed their interest to use this questionnaire also in their countries. The English

questionnaire is only available in an electronic version. When EASI groups want to use it, they should not change the wording of the questions to enable a later comparison of answers on country-level. Xavier will address all national teams with a specific request for participation and details about how to run this questionnaire.

**9. EASI Publication**

Jan, Nina and Yehuda have written an article for the special issue on harmonization of Clin Chem Lab Med on “what is EASI”. The Forum members will be informed when it is published.

**10. Different topics from the local EASI groups**

This point had to be skipped due to lack of time, but will be covered by Manfred Herold in the EASI session.

**11. Next EASI Forum Meeting**

The next EASI forum meeting will take place at the 11<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Autoimmunity in Lisbon, May 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> 2018.