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# Young European Biotech Network

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Official newsletter of the Young European Biotech Network (YEBN). Edited by the YEBN communication task group.

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## Institutional Member focus: ASBTEC



*Interview with Alba Olivares Polo, ASBTEC Chairwoman*

#### What is ASBTEC?

ASBTEC is a non-profit organisation consisting of professionals, students and other people related to biotechnology. Our association was founded in 2005 by the first biotechnology graduates in Spain due to an impending need to coordinate professionals of the field. Since then, our association has been growing steadily and, nowadays, ASBTEC is supported by all the universities in Catalonia and many R&D centres.

#### What is the aim of your association?

The aim of ASBTEC was to set up and now to expand a network of students and professionals to provide them with tools to support themselves – not only during their studies, but also during their career. Likewise, our efforts are also directed to support biotechnologists by representing this professional

*and check the last page for two upcoming events in February: ScieCon Munich on **February 2<sup>nd</sup>** and Zurich Life Science Day 2011 on **February 15<sup>th</sup>**. Enjoy your reading!*

*Annika Hohendahl, Marie Müller*

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*Get insights into alternative careers, complementary skills and grants in our Naturejobs Career Expo report on the last pages*

category in society and towards companies and institutions.

#### How is ASBTEC working to achieve these goals? What are your activities?

ASBTEC tries to strengthen the link between all the different actors in biotechnology by organising various projects and events to connect institutions, companies, professionals and students. These events are mainly addressed to young biotechnologists with topics that will help our members to broaden the range of options offered by their studies in order to facilitate their decision-making process on how to build their career. These activities also offer training in complementary skills and entrepreneurship, two subjects currently



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absent in our educational system, but essential to develop innovative and efficient research.

Moreover, ASBTEC offers a platform where our members can carry out their own projects or participate in already running ones, using a hands-on and engaging approach. Those are training experiences that allow to acquire and improve new skills in a dynamic and friendly atmosphere.

#### **Why did you join ASBTEC?**

I regarded ASBTEC as a great opportunity to join a group of biotechnologists that share

my concerns and needs. In ASBTEC, I can work with other biotechnologists to improve our situation and at the same time acquire new skills that I consider very useful for developing my career. As a matter of fact, ASBTEC has provided me with more enriching experiences than I could have ever imagined. Thus, I wholeheartedly encourage new generations of biotechnologists to join our team.

#### **Why is ASBTEC a member of YEBN?**

Biotechnology is a discipline that enjoys a broad international

mobility of professionals and students. That is why, shortly after its foundation, ASBTEC envisioned the need to work on an international level. We found YEBN as an international organisation with shared goals, with which we could expand our biotechnologists' network to face problems together as well as learn from each other by exchanging experiences and enjoying our time together.

Interview by Laura Gómez Quevedo and Rosa del Hoyo Pérez

## Event Report

### **YEBN Annual Meeting 2010 in Wrocław**

The YEBN Annual Meeting 2010 was held in Wrocław from November 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> – in one of the most beautiful old Polish cities. In contrast to previous plans this year's Annual Meeting was organised in collaboration with the Polish Institutional Member (IM) ASSB, the Academic Association of Biotechnology Students, as a satellite event to the II International Student Conference of Biotechnology at the University of Wrocław. There was no participation fee for all YEBN members willing to participate in the conference.

The Annual Meeting is the most important gathering in the YEBN event calendar. It is crucial to ensure the sustainability of the network, bring members of the different countries together and approve the actions, which were taken by the Executive Board (EB) in the past year. The General Assembly was held on Saturday November 20<sup>th</sup> with delegates from ANBI, ASBTEC, ASSB, Club Biotech, CNSB, FEBiotech, NGB, Task and Project Groups and several highly interested further YEBN members. The main decisions taken in the General Assembly were the approval of YEBN activities in 2010, the election of the new EB and the definition of priorities for 2011. The new EB decided

to distribute the different functions as follows: new Chairwoman is Natalia Borkowska, Annika Hohendahl is the new Vice-Chairwoman, Irina Epstein and Debora Keller are entrusted with the tasks of Secretary and Treasurer respectively and last but not least Denis Bilotta is Communication Officer. On the last day of the Annual Meeting we focused on future perspectives and enhancing the collaboration between IMs. Outcomes of this brainstorming will be further discussed within the YEBN Board and Task/Project Groups in order to design the strategy of the network for 2011. Especially careers, communication and entrepreneurship were identified as the areas of the highest interest of YEBN IMs. Further a calendar of events carried out by IMs in 2011 was designed that will be partially published in the YEBN Newsletter.

We hope to see you this year!

Natalia Borkowska

## The new YEBN Executive Board

During the last Annual Meeting (Wroclaw, November 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010), a new Executive Board was elected. Find out what they are up to below.

### Annika - Vice Chairwoman

“ Foster the interaction and collaboration between YEBN and IMs and increase the transparency of the activities of the executive board ”



### Irina - Secretary

“ Represent YEBN as THE communication platform for European life scientists and support them to turn their ideas into projects on a European level ”



### Debora - Treasurer

“ Strengthen the link between YEBN and IMs, as well as among IMs and involve young members in the different projects and task groups, to enable them to participate and share experiences ”



### Denis - Communication Officer

“ Further improve the communication of YEBN and help to increase collaboration, commitment and participation of the members ”



### Natalia - Chairwoman

“ Build a strong sense of collaboration between Institutional Members of YEBN to raise their awareness that only acting together can be of benefit for the whole network and ameliorate perception of YEBN by other European stakeholders ”



our goals

### ScieKickIn – Life sciences on the pitch

Life sciences and football do not have anything in common? In Munich they actually do have, at least since btS set up the ScieKickIn in 2008. ScieKickIn means “Science Kicks with Industry” and is a football tournament for life sciences students, institutes and companies.

The idea of ScieKickIn is to link academia and industry but in a very informal and casual way that creates a great atmosphere. Nonetheless, most teams primarily come to play football, to have fun and to win.

For the third ScieKickIn, 14

teams gathered in Munich on August 28<sup>th</sup>. Biotech start-ups, big pharma companies such as Roche or Novartis and several regional companies like 4SC and ibidi played against teams from research institutes like the Gene Center Munich and the Center for Integrated Protein Science Munich. And of course the btS “All Star” team was also not missing. “We did not only have btS members from Munich in our team, but also from Heidelberg, Erlangen, Biberach and Braunschweig.” said Thomas Berger, captain of the btS team.

In the award ceremony the teams that were best in shape were honoured: Team MorphoSys,

accompanied by the biggest and loudest fan group won the first prize, followed by Gene Centaurs from the Gene Center Munich and the team of 4SC.



“The only thing that again did not want to play along was the weather. Anyway, for our fans rain and ScieKickIn somehow already belong together.” stated Anna Bode, member of the btS Executive Board.

Georg Faust

## NatureJobs Career Expo 2010

## event report

NatureJobs Career Expo was an opportunity to discover a whole new world beyond the bench. Attendees could follow parallel keynote lectures, take action in workshops and interact with different exhibitors. Take a look at some of the most interesting lectures below.

### Alternative careers stream

#### Careers in marketing

Tim Mannveille diverged from his PhD studies to focus on marketing that he highlighted during his speech as something much more than just advertisement. He compared the sector to an arcade style videogame of science: fast conclusions, simple models and feasible solutions in a frenetic changing and "infoxicating" (info intoxicating) environment and tools. The audience could get an insight into marketing with some examples that showed a need for specific skills like rigor, analytic abilities, technology wisdom and creative thinking, and a problem solving attitude. He dropped a final tip: avoid HR departments!

Roi Villar Vázquez

#### Careers on technology transfer

The Technology Transfer Team from the King's College London Business Ltd. introduced the participants into innovation, its protection and transfer in a framework, where academic institutions, subsidiaries, research fellows and industry show completely different interests. Even though there is no formal training in technology transfer, the speakers explained a well-structured process consisting of the identification of possible inventions, admission, evaluation, protection, development,

patent marketing, licensing and commercialisation. Participants realised that tasks like portfolio management, contract writing and research fellow's training form an important part of a technology transfer job.

Roi Villar Vázquez



### Complementary skills stream

After lunch the soft- and transferable skills session was held by Anna Price, Steve Tarling and Emilia Danilowicz-Luebert. Anna and Steve analysed the skills presented by a principle investigator and other research fellows in comparison to those developed in industry on a rough basis: **team playing, problem solving, cultural diverse negotiation and persuasion abilities**, but with different actors and interests. Anna pointed out how **action plans** can be used in career management. Action plans take time into account and are composed of achievable and specific objectives; starting with

easy steps extensive use is made of networking and peer-advising that will offer new opportunities to grow in your career.

In the following session, Emilia from the **Careers in Life Sciences (CiLS)** Project Group of YEBN introduced a socio-scientific point of view of the skills really needed by the industry. In open questions young researchers could state their needs as young researchers looking for a change in their career. The CiLS study itself was conducted with two main objectives: **identify the key factors driving and impeding life science careers** and assess, which **skills young life scientists** consider

valuable **in comparison** with those required by the **industry**.

After some insights into the study methodology, results were released to the public. These revealed surprising differences in the needs of typically-scientist-recruiting companies versus new scientist-hiring companies. Nevertheless, in both types of companies, **lab researcher positions were the fewest and easiest to cover** in contrast to those that demanded **teamwork, managing and multitasking professionals**.

Even though scientists and industries equally appreciate most of the important skills, **scientists**

## NatureJobs Career Expo 2010

## event report

tend to overestimate regulation, funding, publication factors, grants and awards, factors that are quite useless for industry. In contrast it has been shown that companies need creative and analytical thinking from scientists, and value their research background, expertise and grades, as well as experience, internships

and languages. Post-doc research experience was a controversial factor disregarded by industry. In a final talk, Emilia focused on how these skills can easily be acquired by joining and getting involved in volunteer networks, by managing associative tasks, and taking entrepreneurial actions. This involvement

results in business thinking minds, entrepreneurship skills, negotiation and problem solving abilities and the capacity to deal with cultural diversity, deadlines and discipline.

Roi Villar Vázquez

### EU grant workshop

September 23<sup>rd</sup>, Thursday afternoon, 2-4 pm: two hours to be overwhelmed by information on funding opportunities that the EU is offering to young investigators, from the undergraduate level up to twelve-year post docs. The workshop organised by the European Commission thoroughly described the opportunities opened up by the **People programme** with the Marie Curie actions and by the European Research Council (**Ideas**), with the recently introduced Starting Grants.

David Pina from the Research Executive Agency (REA) focused on individual-driven Marie Curie Actions within the People programme. "People" as being absolutely people-focused provides funds for salary and travel support, but not for research. If you are a post doc, whether you want to move from an EU country to another (**Intra-European Fellowships, IEF**), want to experience research in a third country (Outgoing International Fellowships, OIF) or are in a third country and desire to come to Europe (**Incoming International Fellowships, IIF**), there is a fellowship right for you. Similarly to the **Framework Programme 6 (FP6)**, mobility remains the keyword, both geographical and sectorial mobility. However, something new has been introduced with the **FP7**, for example the focus on Personal Career Development (PCD) with a personalised plan for each fellow entering a Marie Curie programme. This materialises in training funds of up to 800 € per month awarded to the fellow along with the already good salary (ranging from 58,500 to 87,500 € gross amount per year) and mobility funds (700 – 1,000 € per month). Among the nine Marie Curie schemes

currently in place, only one provides financial support for research activities: the **Career Integration Grant (CIG)** is intended for post docs starting their career as independent investigators. It is a small amount (about 25,000 € per year) compared to grants offered by the **European Research Council (ERC)**, but the success rate is much higher. It is definitely worth to give it a try!

Volker Wachtler, Scientific Officer from the respective unit, presented the Starting Grants that were recently introduced by the ERC to support investigator-driven frontier research. About 7.5 Billion € have been allocated to this programme, funds that will be distributed along the seven years of the FP7, a bit less in the first years and more towards the end. If you are a postdoctoral researcher with experience ranging from two to twelve years, with at least one publication where your PhD tutor is not listed among the authors, excellent records in your field and a brilliant idea... this is the place to go! To guarantee equal opportunities to all stage-postdocs, the ERC has recently introduced a further division among applicants: **starters** (two to seven years of postdoctoral research) and **consolidators** (seven to twelve years of experience after their PhD). **ERC Starting Grant** can be awarded for a period of two to five years and is portable, i.e. they stay with the fellow, wherever he/she decides to go.

The workshop ended with an insightful introduction to **Euraxess**, aiming at becoming the reference service point "for researchers seeking to advance their careers and personal development by moving to other countries". There are four main focus areas

## NatureJobs Career Expo 2010

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within Euraxess: job, services, rights and links. **Job** is the place where offers meet demands, where funding opportunities can be found and job positions are posted. The section **Services** provides support for issues ranging from visa application to pension, family, health and childcare schemes. And this is not just an online service: wherever you go, you will have an office with well trained staff to assist you. The focus of **Rights** is on ethical issues regarding working conditions and social security and has produced the European Charter of Researcher along with the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment. They have now introduced a logo certifying universities that adhere to the Code of Conduct and comply with it. Finally, **Links** aims at providing a framework for networking among EU researchers working abroad (at the moment the space is open for US, Japan, China and India).

It really looks like we are not alone anymore and we should start thinking at a European rather than national level. It looks like Europe values science and scientists and we should start catching opportunities from now!

Chiara Cipollina

Useful websites:

[http://cordis.europa.eu/home\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html)

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>

<http://erc.europa.eu/>

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/>

## Upcoming events in Life Sciences

### ScieCon Munich, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 in Munich, Germany

The ScieCon is Germany's oldest and biggest life sciences career fair. In October 2010, btS organised the sixteenth ScieCon, a career fair with 25 exhibitors that attracted 1300 visitors. This success stimulated high expectations for the upcoming ScieCon in Munich. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, a multitude of students and young professionals will get the opportunity to meet their future employers: Biotech and pharmaceutical companies,



research institutes, consultancies and many more! CV checks, a shooting for application photos, a discussion about doing a PhD and company presentations will be offered as well.

Free entrance, no registration required. More info at [www.sciecon.info](http://www.sciecon.info)

Christine Weckenmann

### Zurich Life Science Day 2011, February 15<sup>th</sup> in Zurich, Switzerland

The Young Scientists Network (YSN) organises the 2nd conference on career opportunities for young life scientists (Bachelor-, Master-, PhD-students, young professionals) on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in Zurich, Switzerland. Although many life scientists are

involved in R&D you may decide to work in another area within life sciences such as administration, consulting or teaching. At this conference you will get insights into career paths in research, non-research and how to start your own enterprise. Further, a tradeshow and CV checks will be offered. Do not miss this event and start planning your career. Registration is open.

More information at [www.lifescience-youngscientists.ch](http://www.lifescience-youngscientists.ch)

Theresa Kämpfer

