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Greetings from the new president

If someone had come some years ago and said that there would be a war in Europe in a couple of years, I wouldn't have believed him. Future is unpredictable. Nor would I have thought that weird fake news, such as the claim that the corona vaccines contain microchips, could be taken so seriously by some people. Nowadays it is much easier to mislead people than it used to be — small populist groups and conspiracy theorists can easily spread their message via social media and gain more supporters. Some people don't use traditional media as a source of information anymore.



This time challenges us as science journalists to do our work better and better. We are the voice of science and reason. We need to bring out the achievements of science and research in an interesting way, combat fake news and fight for truthful information. I believe that in this work we have a lot to learn from each other and a lot to give to each other. National science journalists' associations do valuable work by bringing science journalists together, by providing education and organizing meetings between researchers and journalists.

I hope we in EUSJA can unite the national associations from different countries to share good practices and give science journalists opportunities to meet each other.

Traditionally, EUSJA has organized study trips to different countries, and they have been turn out to be very useful and popular. In our member's survey, many of the respondents wished for study trips and other international meetings. At the same time, since EUSJA is

a head organization of national science journalists' associations, our activities are strongly dependent on the activity of our member associations. I hope you could consider whether your national association could organize a study trip to your country. I know that you all are very busy nowadays, but on the other hand, I believe that organizing a meeting and seeing other science journalists is rewarding. Please, contact me, if you and your national association could think of organizing a study trip. Also, please, remind your national association members about the opportunity to apply for travel grants to Heidelberg Laureate forum (deadline 30.4.!).

Have a nice spring!

Mari Heikkilä
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Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists
EUSJA president



Report from EUSJA GA and visit to Milano 25.–28.1.2023

26.1.

EUSJA General Assembly -meeting was implemented as in the EUSJA constitution article 4: Assembly (updated version 24.3.2018). In the beginning of the meeting president Jens Degett welcomed the delegates from different countries, some of them were attending via online video call. Degett gave a president's report about the activities of EUSJA, told about former EU-projects, past events etc. Treasurer Kaianders Sempler introduced a financial report of EUSJA. The reports were approved by the general assembly. Also a new board for EUSJA was formed: Mari Heikkilä, President, Jens Degett, Vice-President, Alberto Pieri, Treasurer, Dino Trescher, Honorary Secretary. We also discussed about the current situation of EUSJA member associations and science journalism in different countries.



EUSJA GA-meeting. Foto: Marina Huzvarova.

Visit to IFOM. IFOM is a cancer research institute focused on the study of cancer formation and development at molecular level. There were many very interesting research topics, such as the research about how SARS-CoV-2 damages DNA and causes cellular aging and inflammation — which can be linked to long COVID symptoms. Fabrizio d'Adda di Fagagna told us about this interesting research, which was later published in Nature Cell Biology (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41556-023-01096-x>). It was also very interesting to see the cancer cell microscoping in laboratory and hear how the different cancer types are diagnosed. We also heard about liquid biopsy of cancer and how glioma cancer cells move along the blood vessels in the brain.



Our group in visit to IFOM. Foto: Cinzia Boschiero.



Duomo di Milano by night. Foto: Marina Huzvarova.

In the evening we had a really nice and plentiful dinner at our host association UGIS member Pia Bassi. Nice discussions, wine and excellent food — what a perfect combination!



Dinner by Pia Bassi. Fotos: István Palugyai

27.1.

Visit to Research energy systems (RSE S.p.A). There we had an opportunity to get acquainted and discuss with specialists about the energy issues: sustainability of the energy sources, current energy crisis, smart electricity systems, renewable energy. And since we were a group of eager science journalists we really had a lot of questions! The discussion was really fruitful! We also had an opportunity to visit the laboratories and different research areas.



EUSJA members visited Research Energy Systems (RSE) solar panel research area. Foto: Mari Heikkilä

Visit to CNR, Institute of Chemical Sciences and Technologies 'Giulio Natta' (SCITEC)

and Institute of Agricultural Biology and Biotechnology. We met many researchers from different research projects and heard for example about the future of plastics: how plastics can be made from renewable sources. We also discussed about the future of food production: gmo-plants and how food production could become more sustainable.



Visit to CNR, Institute of Chemical Sciences. Foto: Mari Heikkilä



The future of food? Institute of Agricultural Biology and Biotechnology studies for example these small water plants, which could become one new food source for us.
Foto: Cinzia Boschiero.

28.1.
Guided tour to Museum of Science Milano. EUSJA members had opportunity to meet and discuss with researchers who work in the European projects of the museum.



EUSJA members visited Museum of Science, Milano. Foto: Cinzia Boschiero.

Impressions about the trip to Milan

by Marina Hofmanova (Huzvarova), Czech republic :

"The first in-person EUSJA General Assembly after the disruption due to COVID was like a family meeting. This is how I would describe my feelings from this year's GA EUSJA in Milan. Thanks to our Italian colleagues we got a chance to see each other again in person, not only on-line. We experienced not only a purely collegial meeting accompanied by study trips, but also very personal and friendly invitations to our colleagues' homes for delicious Italian food and drinks. It was in this wonderfully friendly atmosphere that the extremely important matter of electing our new board was finally accomplished. Having overcome our ailments of the past, EUSJA could thus be handed into new unblemished hands. And just like we are seeing elsewhere, our Science Journalists' Association now stands on the threshold of our reboot. Where there is common interest and effort, the desired result will follow.

And apart from the EUSJA GA, my trip to Milan was significant to me for another important reason: It took place at the time of the presidential elections in my country. Therefore, I made sure to vote for the Czech president at the polling station of the Czech consulate in the beautiful city of Milan. Long live the EUSJA!"



Voting for the Czech president.



by Mari Heikkilä, Finland:

"In Milan I noticed how important it is for science journalists from different countries to meet and keep in touch with each other. It was good to discuss with the colleagues and hear experiences about the current situation, such as fake science news, energy crisis and a polarization of political opinions. We had a really nice

and fruitful meeting. Special thanks to [UGIS](#) and [FAST](#) members for organizing the meeting! We had a splendid time together in Italy and a very interesting and diverse scientific program."



More reports from EUSJA visit in Milano (in different languages):

Article by Anna May Mason (Catalonia):

<https://www.accc.cat/2023/02/06/un-nou-comencament-per-leusja-a-mila/>

Articles by István Palugyai (Hungary):

<https://tudas.hu/tudta-hogy-van-bekalencse-genbank-is/>

<https://tudas.hu/az-emberiseg-egyetem-es-zsenije-leonardo/>

Articles by Cinzia Broschiero (Italy):

https://www.affaritaliani.it/rubriche/pillole_europa/scuole-progetti-europei-nuovi-studi-su-alzheimer-infortuni-domestici-834741.html

https://www.affaritaliani.it/rubriche/pillole_europa/progetto-enjoi-tutela-contro-truffe-a-difesa-delle-imprese-europee-837205.html



APPLY NOW! Journalist travel grants available for 10th Heidelberg Laureate Forum

Now it is time to apply for a travel grant to the Heidelberg Laureate Forum (HLF), which will take place from September 24 to 29, 2023. **Deadline for applications is April 30!** [Fill in an application for a travel grant here \(https://www.eusja.org/apply-now-journalist-travel-grants-available-for-10th-heidelberg-laureate-forum/\)](https://www.eusja.org/apply-now-journalist-travel-grants-available-for-10th-heidelberg-laureate-forum/).

ABOUT THE HLF: The Heidelberg Laureate Forum is an annual networking conference where 200 carefully selected young researchers in mathematics and computer science have the unique chance to meet distinguished scientists in their fields for one week of interdisciplinary academic dialogue. Attending journalists will have the exclusive opportunity to interview renowned laureates from mathematics and computer science, both in press panels and one-on-one. In addition, they will be able to engage directly with some of the most promising young researchers from those fields. In celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the HLF, this year's Forum will feature a number of special guests, innovative formats and exhibitions as well as retrospectives to commemorate this milestone.

[More info about Heidelberg Laureate Forum.](#)



EUSJA member association survey – FILL OUT NOW!

Some of you have already answered the EUSJA member association survey, thank you very much for your answers! We already got answers from Italy, Austria, France, Hungary, Sweden, Finland. But we would still like to get some more answers from our member associations. Thus, if you have not answered the survey yet, you can answer it now. I will tell about the results in the next newsletter.

Here is information about the survey:

EUSJA's Board would like to hear about the situation of your organisations and what kind of activities you would like EUSJA to organize. Attached, please, find a link to a survey aimed at member organisations. In this way, we can find out what people hope and expect – and what is the situation of your organisation. At the same time, we are asking your willingness to join in organizing an activity, for example a study trip. I know that time is a limited resource today, but on the other hand, doing things together and meeting people is really empowering and worth the effort!

Link for the EUSJA Survey:

<https://forms.gle/1G6rurt4FVAM3iym8>

I hope you could forward this survey link to the secretary or president of your association if you are not active in the association yourself.

Please, send me also information, if the EUSJA delegate of your association has changed. I will update the contact information, if needed.

Mari Heikkilä

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