

The First International EURASNET Conference on Alternative Splicing



21 - 23 May 2008

**Larische Palace, Jagiellonian University
Kraków, Poland**

Organized by:

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Report of the First International EURASNET Conference on Alternative Splicing

21-23 May 2008, Kraków, Poland

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Overview:

EURASNET, the EU-funded *Network of Excellence on Alternative Splicing*, hosted a conference on the mechanisms, physiological importance and disease-associations of alternative splicing in the very beautiful city of Kraków. Both scientists and clinicians were warmly invited to participate.

Venue:

The venue was the magnificent Larische Palace of the Jagiellonian University, in the heart of the Old Town of Kraków. Lectures were held in the 300 seat Lecture Hall of the Larische Palace with its state-of-the-art audio visual facilities and comfortable seating.

Refreshments during session breaks were served in the lobby outside the lecture Hall, posters were displayed in a neighbouring room, and workshops were also situated close-by. Accommodation was in specially selected hotels and guest houses within walking distance of the meeting venue.

Organisation:

NoE member, Artur Jarmolowski, was the lead organiser, aided by Jean Beggs, Angela Krämer and Stefan Stamm. Professional administration services were provided by the Jagiellonian University Events Office.

Funding:

The Conference was supported by funds from EC FP6 via the EURASNET NoE, by sponsorship from Exonhit Therapeutics, Affymetrix and the RNA Society, and by a registration fee of €350 per person from non-NoE participants.

Aims:

The aims of this First International Meeting were:

- 1) To exchange information on the latest advances in the field.
- 2) To reach out to the broader RNA splicing community and encourage the development of new collaborations between EURASNET NoE members and non-NoE researchers.
- 3) To highlight the importance of alternative splicing research world-wide.
- 4) To raise the profile of the EURASNET NoE internationally.

Program outline:

The conference featured 17 international invited speakers who are experts in the biochemistry, genomics, cell biology and clinical aspects of alternative splicing. A highlight of the meeting was a keynote lecture by Professor Joan Steitz, HHMI Investigator, Yale School of Medicine, and Professor Reinhard Lührmann, coordinator of the EURASNET project, gave an inspiring opening lecture. In addition to the 30 minute talks by invited speakers, 19 shorter oral presentations were invited from selected participants based on submitted abstracts and there were about 70 poster presentations. In addition, there were associated workshops on Career Development, Media Interactions and Bioinformatics.

Evaluation and conclusions:

The conference attracted 191 registrants and, judging from the feedback received, the meeting was successful in achieving all the aims. The quality of the lectures and of the science presented was first class and there was lively discussion following each presentation. There is anecdotal evidence of new collaborations and exchange of procedures and reagents. The poster session was very well attended and lots of enthusiastic discussions took place. Six members of the SAB actively participated in the meeting: Dahlberg, Filipowicz, Garcia-Blanco, Krainer, Singer and Steitz.

The conference was attended by editors from *Nature* and *EMBO Journal*, two of the front rank international journals in which NoE members publish, indicating their considerable interest in the field of alternative splicing and recognising the importance of this conference.

The professional administration service provided by the Jagiellonian University Events Office was extremely efficient and all organisational aspects went smoothly.

A recommendation for the next international conference is not to place information for NoE members on the Conference website, as this may have confusing or misleading for non-NoE researchers.

Publication:

A review of clinically-related aspects of the meeting written by NoE member and clinician Dr Diana Baralle will be published in *EMBO Reports*.

