



Newsletter

HiTID President Bilkay Basturk and Marco Andreani at the successful Balkan EPT Meeting 2024, Istanbul, Turkey



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Report of the EFI Executive Committee Autumn meeting 2024

This Newsletter contains the report of the Executive Committee autumn meeting

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Welcome to Prague for the 38th EFI annual conference

On behalf of the Local Organizing Committee, we are delighted to welcome you to Prague

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Report on the 2024 Balkan EPT Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey

Here you can read the report of the 2024 Balkan EPT meeting, held in Istanbul, Turkey

Dear EFI Members,

It is a great privilege for me to serve as President of EFI, particularly at a time when young colleagues are eager to engage more actively in the activities of our Scientific Society, not only to enhance their knowledge but also to better understand the mechanisms that govern EFI.

This enthusiasm is however similar to the one that characterizes the unwavering dedication of professionals of all ages, who contribute daily to the growth and relevance of our Scientific Society by advancing and spreading the culture of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics through their work, in their institutions or within various EFI Committees. We must never forget that EFI's significant role today is built upon the vision and extraordinary contributions of remarkable scientists from the recent past, to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude.

I am pleased to provide you with this update on the initiatives and upcoming events involving our scientific community over the coming months. First, I would like to inform you that the Chairs of various committees attended the recent Autumn Meeting in Leiden, which included the EFI Executive Committee and Coordinators Meeting. This gathering provided an excellent opportunity to discuss the current state of affairs and plan future initiatives for our society. Additionally, the biannual meeting of the Accreditation Committee was held in Leiden, comprising Regional Commissioners from across Europe. Many of the commissioners served as speakers at the New Inspectors Workshop, where eight new colleagues from eight different countries were trained to contribute to future accreditation programs.

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Report on the 2024 Balkan EPT Meeting, Istanbul, Turkey

The first Balkan EPT Meeting was organized in 2008 at Evangelismos Hospital in Athens by Dr. Chrissy Papasteriades, even though The Balkan EPT HLA Typing Program was already initiated in 2004 by Prof. Dr. Mahmut Çarın, who at that time was in charge of the Tissue Typing Laboratory of Istanbul Medical Faculty. Since then, the Balkan EPT meetings have become an annual scientific, educational and information sharing meeting where participants from EFI Region 8 give presentations on the latest scientific topics and case discussions, and where young researchers have the opportunity to share and discuss their scientific work.

The aim of the BEPT meetings is to promote the field of histocompatibility and immunogenetics through an intensive and comprehensive scientific programme covering a wide range of topics related to immunology, histocompatibility and transplantation. Also, its goal is to inspire all those working in this field by providing young researchers the opportunity to present their research

researchers trying to develop themselves in this field. There were 12 speakers in 5 sessions focusing on various aspects of H&I including solid organ transplantation, haematopoietic stem cell transplantation including KIR, the current status of regional accreditations and the outcomes of the 2024 Balkan EPT in meeting

The first session of the meeting started with the opening speeches of HITID President Bilkay Baştürk and HITID Honorary Member Mahmut ÇARİN, chaired by Dr. Elisaveta Naumova, Dr. Mahmut Çarın and Dr. Fatma Savran Oğuz. EFI President Dr. Marco Andreani started the meeting with a lecture on the role of HLA Evolutionary Divergence (HED) after Allogeneic Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation, Dr. Elisaveta Naumova reviewed Immunological Risk Assessments in transplant recipients and Dr. Ilias Doxiadis presented "Epitopes in Transplantation: Hype or Help". The first day of the meeting ended with a welcome reception where the participants had the opportunity to meet and socialize accompanied by the sound of a wonderful music trio.

The first session of the second day of the meeting was chaired by Dr. Ileana Contantinescu, Dr. Bilkay Baştürk and Dr. Gülderen Yanikkaya Demirel and started with Prof. Dr. Fatma Savran Oğuz's presentation titled "Transplantation immunology in Turkey". Afterwards, Dr. Antonij Slavcev presented the current situation regarding kidney allocation in the Czech Republic and Dr. Ileana Contantinescu presented the selection of hematopoietic stem cell donors for allogeneic HSCT in the NGS era. The first session of the meeting ended with presentations on HSCT activities in Turkey by Dr. Şahika Zeynep Akı and the clinical application of donor derived cell-free DNA

or expand their understanding of histocompatibility and immunogenetics. The country where the meetings is held is selected each year from the candidate Balkan countries by the Steering Committee, which includes the Balkan EPT Providers.

This year, "Annual EFI Region 8 and 18th Balkan EPT" meeting organised by the HLA Immunogenetics and Transplantation Immunology Society (HITID) was held on 15-16 November 2024 at the Istanbul Marriott Hotel. The meeting brought together 235 participants (89 were international participants) from 24 different countries including Türkiye, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Ukraine and United States of America, including expert colleagues in the field of transplantation immunology and genetics and young

monitoring in transplantation by Dr. Katerina Tarassi. The second session was chaired by Dr. Katerina Tarassi and Dr. Ali Şengül and started with the presentation of Dr. Blanka Vidan Jiras on update of the EFI accreditation programme. In this session, non-KIR NK cell receptors and their ligands in HSCT were addressed by Dr. Katarzyna Bogunia Kubik and the immunopathological spectrum of antibody-mediated rejection by Dr. Handan Özdemir with effective scientific presentations and the situation in Romania in terms of organ and tissue transplantation was shared by Dr. Irina Monica Dutescu. It was a scientifically rich session that included industry symposia organized by Gen Plus - Thermo Fisher Scientific and ATC companies.

In the next session, the current accreditation status of regions 8a and 8b was shared by Dr. Irina Monica Dutescu and Dr. Katerina Tarassi, and the results of the Balkan EPT were shared by Dr. Çiğdem Kekik Çınar and Dr. Anastasia Mihaylova, and important points were mentioned in terms of consensus on EPT results.

The last session of the meeting included oral presentations where young researchers had the chance to present their scientific work on an academic and scientific platform. The program was completed with a total of 23 oral and poster presentations. As a result of the votes of the Scientific Committee, Dr. Miray Kavuzlu was awarded with her study titled "Effect Of Golgi Stress on CXCR5 and HLA-G Expression In T Follicular Helper Cells". The gala dinner was organized and the participants had the opportunity for social interaction and good entertainment on the evening of the last day of the meeting.

*Dr. Fatma Savran Oğuz
EFI Region 8 EPT, Istanbul – EPT Provider*