

EUROTOX 2019 Congress Perspective from Sara Gómez-Arnaiz, University of Strathclyde, awardee of the Gay Hawksworth travel fellowship.

I was honoured to be awarded the Gay Hawksworth travel fellowship to attend the 2019 EUROTOX congress in Finland from the 8th to the 11th of September. The beautiful city of Helsinki hosted the conference with attendance of around 1,600 delegates from all over Europe, and a large number of participants from USA, Japan, and China among other countries. The programme covered diverse specialties such as Genotoxicology, Ecotoxicology, and Regulatory toxicology. During the opening ceremony, the president of EUROTOX, Prof. Heather Wallace, and the Congress President Prof. Kai Savolainen announced the theme of EUROTOX 2019 “Toxicology- Science Providing Solutions”, which aimed to highlight the objective of Toxicology as a Science whose research outputs impact directly on the safety and wellbeing of society.

Keynote lectures opened with the presentation of Prof. Markku Kulmala who advocated a holistic approach to tackle increasing exposure to atmospheric contaminants. The second keynote speaker was Prof. Harri Alenius, who integrated multi-omics data in order to understand different molecular interactions with environmental toxins and microorganisms for predictive hazard classification. The SOT Merit Award Lecture was delivered by Dr. Stephen Safe on his lifelong research on anticancer drugs. Prof. Robert Barouki presented the HESI CITE lecture "Toxicology in the Era of the Exposome", and the Bo Holmstedt Memorial Fund Lecture was given by Prof. Wout Slob, who focused on well-founded statistical practices to generate better risk assessments.

The themes of the sessions ranged from the Exposome, Risk assessment, Immunity, Genotoxicity and carcinogens to endocrine disruptors, nanoparticles and developmental toxicity. From the contributions of the speakers, it became clear that Toxicology is currently addressing some challenging questions such as the translation from *in vivo* models to humans, alternative methods to *in vivo* studies, integration of High Throughput data from different platforms and its standardization for regulatory purposes, in addition to the regulation of complex substances. With regard to the latter, a vivid discussion on the classification of endocrine disruptors took place during the traditional Society of Toxicology (SOT) and EUROTOX debate by Dr. Paul Foster and Prof. Martin van den Berg. Also, the talks about the classification of carcinogens during the ECETOC Satellite Meeting reflected the need to reformulate policy in the light of changing scientific views and research findings.

The EUROTOX congress provided several opportunities for fellow toxicologist to meet, as well as an excellent environment to observe technological advances within the industry from the numerous commercial exhibitors. The number of abstracts submitted for poster or oral presentations was circa 700, which have contributed to one of the main outputs of the conference with the publication of a book in "Toxicology Letters".

The poster and Early Career awards were announced during the closing ceremony. The BTS member Dr. Timothy Allen from Cambridge University was one of the awardees. During the occasion, Prof. Heather Wallace acknowledged some of the current challenges that Toxicology is facing. A special focus of EUROTOX is the need to reinforce Toxicology training, which has been in decline during the last decade.

In conclusion, having the opportunity to attend EUROTOX has allowed me to learn from internationally renowned toxicologists and observe current research interests in the field. I hope my experience will encourage other fellow BTS members to apply for the Gay Hawksworth travel fellowship, and attend the 2020 EUROTOX congress in Copenhagen.