



Society for Microbial Ecology and Disease

Executive Board: President: *Elisa Bertazzoni-Minelli*; **Past-President:** *Andrew B. Onderdonk*;

President-Elect: *Eugenia Bezirtzoglou*; **Secretary:** *Veronica Lazar*; **Treasurer:** *Yiannis Kourkoutas*;

Councillors: *Alojz Bomba, Wendy Garrett, Raina Fichorova,*

Reet Mändar, Paola Mastromarino, Luisa Vieira Peixe

SOMED NEWSLETTER

Winter 2014 - 2015

SOMED President's Letter

Dear members, colleagues and friends,

Firstly, I would like to thank all of you for the trust offered to me as SOMED President until 2015.

Secondly, I would like to give you the results of the SOMED Ballot just closed on December for the nomination of the President-Elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer for further 2 years, and the nomination of 3 new Councilors 2015-2016.

Among all the regularly paying SOMED members, 44 have expressed their preferences towards the candidates. The number of votes for each candidate are presented below.

I would express the Society's gratitude to all members that accepted to be candidate in this ballot and welcome Eugenia Bezirtzoglou as President-Elect, Veronica Lazar confirmation as Secretary and the new Councilors 2015-2016 Paola Mastromarino, Reet Mandar and Luisa Vieira Peixe.

Special thanks go to Athanassios Alexopoulos, Sandrine Claus, and Leda Quercia Vieira for serving our Society and to Eugenia Bezirtzoglou for her efforts as SOMED treasurer.

I'm sure that the collaboration among all SOMED Board members will be of success.

The most significant event of the year 2014 was the joint meeting of the Anaerobe Society of the Americas (ASA) and the Society for Microbial Ecology and Disease in Chicago in June-July. Very special thanks go to the Presidents of the

Congress, Professors Dale Gerding and Andrew Onderdonk. I would also like to thank the advisory boards and the local organizing committee for their work. The whole team really performed an excellent job! I believe that all attendants consider this meeting a real success, with high-level presentations, fruitful discussions and nice social events.

It has been a valuable meeting for a multidisciplinary scientific exchange in the field of anaerobes, with special attention paid to *C.difficile* microorganism, and probiotics; it was attended by numerous participants coming from 38 countries.

I'm proud to announce the next SOMED Congress, which will be held in Verona, on October, 11-13, 2015, in spite of the general complicated financial situation.

This Meeting will provide a unique opportunity to meet and discuss the most recent advances in basic intestinal ecosystem and research on the many disorders of the gut, and not only. From the bench to bedside. Technological aspects for probiotics preparation and applications will also be topics for presentation as well as biofilm related infections.

Information on the 37th SOMED Congress will be available soon on the Society website.

I'm finding the aching points that all know and I will keep on facing as the presidents who have preceded me.

- The website will be renovated and will contain information for the Society members and supporters.

- The Membership Directory will also be re-

organized for 2015. An appropriate section will be established as soon as you will complete the updated official - personal data on subscription form.

Thus, for 2015 applications and renewals, I ask you to send your fees directly to the SOMED Treasurer, Prof. Ioannis Kourkoutas as indicated in the 2015 SOMED application form enclosed at the end of this issue. Unfortunately, it is too complicate and expensive to arrange for payments by credit cards. I'm aware of the problems and costs associated with bank transfer or sending cheques but it is the only way to manage the membership fees for a small Society as SOMED. However, we will try to solve this issue.

A student membership subscription with reduced fee is also available.

A campaign of subscriptions of new SOMED members and of "dormant" former members must also be planned. In fact, out of the 224 members paying some years ago, only about 50-60 members have regularly paid their annual fees in the years 2013 and 2014. This dramatic drop in the number of members also corresponded to a limited participation (no more than 100 attendees) to the SOMED meetings organized in recent years.

- SOMED will confirm and extend relationships with other international societies, as ANA, IAG and others with similar and/or complementary interests in our scientific area.

- During Fall months, two congresses of interest for our Society were organized.

-Marika Mikelsaar and other SOMED members have participated on the joint meeting of the International Association for Gnotobiology (XVIII-ISG) and the III International Ecologic Forum "Environment and human health" (EcoForum) in St.Petersburg, Russian Federation, September 21-24, 2014.

The conference was very well organized, with topics related to gnotobiology, internal medicine, tuberculosis diagnosis, sexually transmitted diseases, Ecoforum from Institute of Experimental medicine.

- Rome has been the venue of the Meeting of ESCMID Study Group for Biofilms at IRCCS-Fondazione Santa Lucia, October 9-10, 2014. "Biofilm-based Healthcare-associated Infections: from Microbiology to Clinics" was chaired and organized by Prof. Gianfranco Donelli.

It has been a valuable forum for a multidisciplinary scientific exchange in the field of microbial biofilms attended by 115 participants coming from 28 different countries. The congress has joined together scientists studying basic, clinical

and environmental aspects of microbial biofilms.

-Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease (MEHD).The Journal appears as an OPEN ACCESS net-based journal, considerably widening the spread of obtained scientific knowledge. The journal MEDH was re-established by great efforts of Prof. Tore Midvet and Anne Binslev and with the help of Eugenia as treasurer. The financial aspect between MEDH and SOMED is now correct and there are no debts toward the journal. The publication of multiple articles by SOMED members contributed to positive balance. For further information, please visit the SOMED website (www.somed.nu) during the following months.

- In re-launching our Society, one of the main objectives is to make use of the electronic version of SOMED Newsletter as a bulletin open to receive contributions from members and colleagues on SOMED-related issues.

Information on future meetings, courses, books and other publications as well as short commentaries on hot topics in the field of microbial ecology will be welcomed in order to be published in the SOMED Newsletter.

Please, send your notes to my e-mail address (elisa.bertazzoni@univr.it) or to that of our secretary Professor Veronica Lazar (veronica.lazar2009@gmail.com).

I'm looking forward to your support of my presidency!

I hope to see you all in Verona and I would like to encourage you to join the Society also in order to get all benefits of being a SOMED Member, including the reduction in the registration fee for our SOMED Congress. In fact, SOMED Members regularly paying their membership fee within March 30, 2015, are entitled to reduction in the Congress registration fee.

Looking forward to our next meeting in Verona, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Elisa Bertazzoni Minelli
President

December 2014

**MICROBIAL
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in Health and Disease

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Newsletter contents:

- I. SOMED ballot results for the new Board;**
- II. Report about the Joint Meeting ASA - SOMED, June 28th - July 1st 2014, held in Chicago, USA.**
- III. The meeting of the executive board in Chicago.**

I. SOMED Elections' Results:

SOMED BALLOT organization started in October 2014 with the Nominating Committee (Elisa Bertazzoni, Marika Mikelsaar, Veronica Lazar, Eugenia Bezirtzoglou) proposing candidates for the positions in the Executive Board for the period January 2015 until December 2016.

The Ballots

were sent to the secretary and to the president too, by all the regularly paying members. From the all 58 active members responded to the closing date (10th December) 44 members.

The votes obtained by the candidates are:

President-Elect:

Eugenia Bezirtzoglou (Greece) – 42 votes;
Alojz Bomba (Slovakia)- 2 votes;

Secretary:

Veronica Lazar (Romania)- 43 votes;
Raina Fichorova (USA) – 1 vote;

Treasurer:

Yiannis Kourkoutas (Greece) – 34 votes;
Jelena Stsepetova (Estonia)- 10 votes;

Councillors 2015-2016

Sandrine Claus (UK) – 17 votes;
Reet Mändar (Estonia)- 37 votes;
Paola Mastromarino (Italy)- 42 votes;
Luisa Vieira Peixe (Portugal)- 30 votes.

Please visit our web page (www.somed.nu) that will soon give you the overview of the new SOMED BOARD, and a new form of the *SOMED Membership application 2015*, with the dates of our new treasurer!

We cordially thank the previous councillors Leda QuerciaViera, Sandrine Claus and Athanasios Alexopoulos, for their time and help during the 2012-2014 period.

The new members/positions in the SOMED Board are:

President-Elect:

Eugenia Bezirtzoglou (Greece);

Secretary:

Veronica Lazar (Romania)

Treasurer:

Yiannis Kourkoutas (Greece)

Councillors 2015-2016

Reet Mändar (Estonia);

Paola Mastromarino (Italy);

Luisa Vieira Peixe (Portugal).

II. Report about the Joint Meeting ASA – SOMED, June 28th-July 1st, 2014, Chicago, USA
An updating on the SOMED congress and the joint meeting with ASA (Anaerobe Society of Americas) in Chicago.

ANAEROBE 2014 Round-Up. The 12th Biennial Congress of the Anaerobe Society of the Americas (ASA), was held June 28-July 1, 2014. Held in cooperation with the Society for Microbial Ecology and Disease – at the XXXVII Congress, the meeting had 332 participants from 38 countries. There were 200 presentations, both oral communications or posters, representing the work of nearly 600 researchers from around the world. One of the most important topic – in fact one day session, has been dedicated to the anaerobe *Clostridium difficile*, the cause of an increasing number of opportunistic infections including severe forms in immunocompromised patients in USA and worldwide. It is a typical example of dysbiosis, revealing the huge importance of the of human microbiome equilibrium and its involvement in health and disease.

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If you would like to see some selected photos from the Joint Meeting ASA-SOMED held in Chicago – USA, June 28th - July 1st 2014, please see below:

The amazing city of CHICAGO admired by the boat cruise!



The SOMED president Andrew Onderdonk speaking at the gala dinner.



AWARDS – offered by SOMED, at the Joint Meeting held in Chicago.

It is already traditional for the SOMED Board to stimulate the young researchers and to offer symbolic awards to the most interesting presentations. The winners were decided by vote, by the Board members.

During the last general assembly of the SOMED society, it was proposed to launch an undergraduate competition opened to all 3rd year B.Sc. students performing a research project in microbiology.

In Chicago, Professor Tore Midtvedt (Editor in chief of MEHD) offered the amount of 1000 dollars (~717 Euros) from Ben Gustafson Fund to our Society; the biggest part of this amount (500 Euros) was offered to the *Young Investigator Award* given for the best paper to be published in MEHD following competition.

We are remembering you the winners and their work:

- the selected paper for *Young Investigator Award*:
Composition, antimicrobial, antioxidant and anticancer activity of *Origanum dictamnus* (dittany) essential oil, by Gregoria Mitropoulou, Eleni Fitsiou, Elisabeth

Stavropoulou, Eleni Papavassilopoulou, M. Vamvakias, Aglaia Pappa, Antigoni Oreopoulou, Y. Kourkoutas - GREECE

Another two young investigators have received awards for their posters.

The first poster prize was offered by SOMED and the second prize was offered by the Ben Gustafson fund.

The following young researchers and their coworkers have received the awards for their posters:

1st poster award; Lau, J.T., Whelan, F.J., Herath, I., Pinto-Sanchez, M.I. - Collins, S.M., Bercik, P., Surette, M.G., Characterization of the cultivable human gut microbiota by culture-enriched molecular profiling - CANADA

2nd poster award; Kirtzalidou, E., Fragopoulou, E., Kotsou, M., Mitsou, E.K., Kyriacou, A. - Effects of potential probiotic strains on mechanisms of host defense - GREECE

III. Executive council meeting report

The XXXVIIth SOMED Congress in Chicago, USA.

The meeting's date: June 29th, 2014, 12.30 ~ 13.30

Presence to the meeting of the Board members:

- 6 members: President – Prof. Andrew Onderdonk (from 11) - President Elect– Prof. Eliza Bertazzoni
- Secretary – Prof. Veronica Lazar
- Treasurer – Prof. Eugenia Bezirtzoglou
- Councilors – Prof. Raina Fichorova;
- Assoc. Prof. Reet Mandar;
- Editor-in-Chief of MEHD– Prof.Em. Tore Midtvedt

AGENDA and discussions

1. The actual state of the SOMED – The president of our society, Andrew Onderdonk

considers that this society must survive – the role of microbiome, the ecological vision about its relationship with the host organism and its role in health and disease being more actual than ever;

- concerning the future congress organization and their frequency, he proposed one congress in Europe, and the next year a joint meeting with ASA – in USA;

- the next Meeting 2015– SOMED– in Rome, Italy; the date– not yet fixed; **voted in unanimity;**

- organized by Prof. Elisa Bertazzoni – the SOMED President after the Congress 2014;

2. SOMED membership directory state – the treasurer, Eugenia Bezirtzoglou – presented the actual state of the membership

payment during 2010 – 2014: the continuous decreasing number of active members - related to the economic crisis! We need new strategies to attract new members!

3. Proposals & ideas to attract new members and improve the activity of our society:

- to bring researchers involved in the Microbiome Project and use their knowledge for a more appropriate interpretation of our results;
- partnerships with some universities, in order to realize a continuous education and offer credits;
- the Board members – should sent papers at MEHD (they are doing, but they have to continue);
- awards– for the best publications in MEHD and posters;
- to attract new young members with some advantages: free tax publication, travel grants;
- to attract some sponsors & corporate, for example the pediatric societies and the probiotic companies;
- to send personal letters to old members to renew their membership;
- the past presidents should compose and disseminate between our colleagues/friends an one page arguments, about the importance of our society's survival convincing them to be active SOMED members.

Upcoming meetings 2015 -16:

***The XXXVIII SOMED Cogress –
October 11-13, 2015, Verona, Italy***



Characterising the human microbiome

- Venture capital, collaborations and investment
- The human microbiome's effect on health and disease
- New research into different microbial systems – both inside and outside the GI tract

- Probiotics, prebiotics, diet and the microbiome
- Antibiotic resistance Skin and dermatology research

For a more details, please visit the [agenda page](#).

FEMS - Maastricht, 2015 - kenes.com

Ann. fems-microbiology.kenes.com/
European Microbiologists Congress
The 6th Congress of European Microbiologists (FEMS 2015) will be held 7-11 June 2015 in Maastricht, the Netherlands.

World Congress on Beneficial Microbes: Food, Pharma, Aqua & Beverages Industry

August, 25-27, 2015 Valencia, Spain

***ANAEROBE 2016 - It will be
taking place in Nashville, TN
USA, July 11-14, 2016!***

***For all SOMED members and friends,
we wish you a very happy and successful New Year!***

