

Where to track the progress in biophysics? My experience with the EBSA 2015 Congress

Written by Dr Anna Wypijewska del Nogal, Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry, Gottingen, Germany

Biophysics is an interdisciplinary science by definition. In fact, it does not engage only the methods of physics with biology-relevant topics, but also comprises elements of chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology, computational sciences, nanotechnology, pharmacology, medicine, etc. Therefore, scientific meetings dedicated to one of the aforementioned disciplines, albeit complementary, may not be sufficient to grasp innovations in biophysics. A great opportunity to keep updated on recent approaches to study biological molecules/processes by means of biophysics is taking part in the EBSA (European Biophysical Societies' Association) Congress, which is held in Europe every two years.

This year, in July, we were celebrating the 10th EBSA Congress. Dresden – a beautiful German town, well known for its historical past and rich monumental architecture became the scenario for science and the congress' social program. More than 1000 researchers were gathered at the meeting, who could choose one session out of three carried out in parallel. This way, everyone could find an interesting lecture for themselves, selecting it from a broad range of topics; from proteins, nucleic acids, lipids, membranes, cells to neuroscience and systems biology. In addition, there were sessions focusing rather on technics than biological objects, e.g., single-molecule technics, nanobiophysics, spectroscopy, optical and scanning microscopy or biomolecular simulations. Along with enriching professional experience and discovering pathways for project development from excellent lectures, everyone could enjoy the possibility of discussing their work upon numerous poster sessions. Together with social events, they catalysed the exchange of fresh ideas, individual opinions and created a great framework for establishing interdisciplinary collaborations.

For all these reasons, I have been coming to the EBSA Congresses from the moment when I was a Ph.D. student at the Division of Biophysics, Institute of Experimental Physics, University of Warsaw till now, as a post-doc at the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Gottingen. An important factor that I also take from the congress is the encouragement it gives young people (both students and early-stage researchers), who can apply for EBSA bursaries or even participate for free in workshops and satellite meetings precedent to the main congress.

A final note for your agenda: the next EBSA Congress will take place in Edinburgh, 16-20 July, 2017.

See you in Scotland!

Anna