

The Division of Analytical Chemistry

of the

European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuCheMS)



European Analytical Column No. 33

This annual column constitutes a long and valuable tradition of DAC, however, this time DAC appears with a new 'family name' since the parent organization 'Federation of European Chemical Societies' has recently adopted the name *European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences*. The main reason being that the former acronym FECS was not related with enough evidence to chemistry, so that internet searches produced hits concerning cancer societies with higher scores than those concerning chemical societies. The new acronym, EuCheMS, is much more self explanatory, at least with respect to Europe and Chemistry. The impetus for choosing a new name emerged from an intensified cooperation with the partners in the 'Alliance for Chemical Sciences and Technologies in Europe' (AllChemE) which has given Chemistry a voice that is heard in Europe. To play any significant role in Europe, rather than being a penniless group of idealistic volunteers, a legal status and a permanent address preferably in Brussels became mandatory. To achieve this goal the Constitution was re-drafted with the intention to convert FECS into EuCheMS, as an 'association internationale sans but lucratif' (a not for profit organisation) under Belgian law.

The proposal of the new name provoked intense discussions within FECS and its constituent bodies. This also happened in the DAC Annual Meeting, and the concerns were put forward by numerous Delegates to the boards of the societies they represent. As a consequence this topic rose in importance among the participants of the FECS General Assembly held in Bucharest in October 2004. Other important perspectives contained in the draft Constitution were a possible budget and a modified voting procedure. Anyway, the Constitution and the new name as proposed by the Task Group on Governance and as passed by the Executive Committee were accepted by 30 member societies with only one vote against. The EuCheMS logo and the adjusted DAC logo differ from the former ones only by the new acronym within the blank 'E' within the red hexagon.

EuCheMS represents some 170 000 European chemists who are members of 50 national societies. To safeguard their interests EuCheMS strives to convey their views to the European authorities and decision makers, to give political impact in the ongoing discussions on all chemistry and molecular science related issues including the process of shaping the European research framework. While in earlier years Europe was just a vague idea and thus, the scope of European interests of the national societies was quite limited, now the political development - in particular the migration of political power towards the EC - requires a more active and detailed presentation of the needs and views of the chemical societies and their individual members. This means it will be necessary to develop a professional representation whose expert knowledge, opinion and advice are taken into account. In addition it requires an improved, easier flow of

information and intensified interaction between the community of European chemists, the national societies with their specialized sub-groups and EuCheMS. It is a challenge - not to speak of a problem - to keep the communication between the different partners alive and focussed on the issues that need to be solved on a European level. Therefore, DAC encourages all its Delegates to actively seek discussions with the boards of the societies they represent in the division. This interaction is all the more necessary as in such a wide field as encompassed by Analytical Chemistry one cannot expect each individual Delegate to cover the entire field but the Delegates must act as interface to the specialists of their member society.

The present structure of EuCheMS might convey the impression that only narrow sectors within the whole field of chemistry and molecular sciences find a level of attention which has justified the establishment of a Working Party or even a Division. Besides the general topics of 'history' and 'education', complemented by analytical chemistry as a ubiquitous aspect, just a selection from the important fields of practice such as 'food' and 'environment', and of specializations such as 'electrochemistry' and 'organo-metallics' are at present looked after by dedicated FECS/EuCheMS groups. Currently some core disciplines such as physical and organic chemistry are missing. Admittedly the spectrum has been complemented recently by new Working Parties dealing with the important topics 'miniaturization' and 'biochemistry'.

The wide coverage of the field by specialized expert groups should make it evident for everybody, that knowledge and experience from all chemical disciplines are of importance to EuCheMS. It should be relatively easy to establish such expert groups because often the broad based national chemical societies comprise of related subgroups or even EuCheMS member societies specialise in these fields, e.g. the German Bunsen Society for Physical Chemistry. These core subject area groups would require additional Delegates to be appointed by the member societies - for a Division at least Delegates of 20 societies. Such an increase of efforts renders it necessary to think about mission and tasks of such groups and the added value to be expected. It also immediately raises the question whether the previous system of society representatives is the best or whether one can find a leaner organization e.g. by somehow making use of the expertise available in the member societies. The answers will also affect the existing Working Parties and Divisions and hence the DAC Steering Committee is now thinking how to gain maximum effect and make best use of the resources.

For the passed six years the DAC has been guided by the Chairman, Miguel Valcárcel. He took over after the untimely death of the previous chairman Robert Kellner. The re-start was supported by the Chairman *ad interim*, the FECS President Lauri Niinistö together with the DAC Secretary at that time Bauke te Nijenhuis. In the six years since then the DAC statutes 'Procedures and Practices' were re-drafted in 1999, and additional procedures, e.g. related to events organized in cooperation with DAC or the establishment of the Robert-Kellner Lecture, were added by amendments in 2003. Three EUROANALYSIS conferences were held in Lisbon (2000), Dortmund (2002) and Salamanca (2004). About half of the present Delegates joined the Division during this period - either replacing a predecessor or as the Delegate of a society appointing an analytical representative for the first time. DAC has been actively represented in the

FECS Executive Committee and has institutionalized the cooperation with EURACHEM, the other FECS/EuChE MS Divisions and Working Parties as well as with journals e.g. those publishing this column and in particular Anal. Bioanal. Chem. within a specific partnership. An important landmark in this era is the Eurocurriculum II for Analytical Chemistry which was developed within the Bologna Process. This is paralleled by the appearance of the thoroughly revised second edition of the text book 'Analytical Chemistry' edited by R. Kellner, J.M. Mermet, A. Otto, M. Valcárcel and M. Widmer (ISBN 3-527-30590-4).

Further books, publications, special issues and editorials on behalf of DAC appeared and are cited on the DAC website, which was set up some years ago, grew and now is ready to be re-organized. Because of the new 'family name', DAC has opened an additional domain www.dac-euchems.org from where one directly accesses the information collected so far under www.dac-fecs.org. While the European Analytical Column addresses the wider community annually, the Delegates and Observers (DAC members appointed by non-European societies and international institutions) as well as their organizations receive three Letters of Information per year. The general availability of E-mail facilitated and intensified the communication both within the Steering Committee, i.e. the board of DAC, as well as the exchange with the DAC members (and saves the society supporting the Secretary quite some money).

The DAC chairman is elected for three years and can be re-elected once. Therefore at the Annual Meeting held in September 2004, the DAC Delegates had to determine a new chairman for the period from the beginning of 2005 to the end of 2007, they choose Bo Karlberg of Stockholm University, Sweden. He is known to mediate between the needs of academic research and of industry, as demonstrated by the high level of industry participation in the conference series 'Analytical Days' he is organizing with great success. On the whole, Bo Karlberg stands for cooperation of DAC with organizations, institutions and industry. Being personally devoted to education he strives for new ways for students from all over Europe to share in the most advanced PhD programmes. The DAC Secretary was eligible to be reappointed again and to provide some continuity, Heiner Korte of ISAS - Institute for Analytical Sciences, Dortmund, Germany, was appointed for a third three-year term.

The Annual Meeting and the election took place in Salamanca, Spain, in conjunction with EUROANALYSIS XIII which was favoured by virtually all positive influences one can hope for when organizing a scientific conference. The number of registered participants exceeded the anticipated figure to such an extent that moving into the bigger congress palace was almost enforced and may partly be seen as resulting from the Spanish interest in analytical chemistry which is not found at equal level in many other European countries. The outstanding selection of speakers were accompanied by excellent posters - a fact which gave the poster jury a hard time even though numerous prizes waited to be awarded. Several lectureships constituted awards, such as the FECS Lecture given by Andreas Manz (ISAS, Dortmund, Germany) whose nomination by the Spanish Society of Analytical Chemistry SEQA had eventually been endorsed by the FECS Executive Committee. Jarda Ruzicka (University of Seattle, USA) had been awarded the Robert-Kellner Lecture recently established by the DAC by a jury of five

renowned European analytical chemists, independent of DAC. After an interim of some years, the Heinrich-Emanuel-Merck Award was presented once again at a EUROANALYSIS conference, which provided an appropriate frame and an expert audience for the fascinating lecture of the awardee, Yoshinobu Baba (University of Tokushima, Japan). Without an attempt to compete with reports on this conference or giving detailed account of its scientific topics, it is interesting to note that these award lectures as well as further plenary and key-note lectures referred to different aspects of miniaturization which was complemented by a dedicated topical session. The more than 600 posters - on display in the open arcades around a medieval patio - gave an overview on current analytical practise including the local flavours of olives and wine. The venue itself - a modern structure within medieval walls - located within a charming historical city with outstanding academic traditions provided the marvellous background to the devoted efforts and the hospitality of the organizers around Jesús Hernández-Méndez and José Luiz Pérez-Pavón which made this event one of the most enjoyable and successful EUROANALYSIS conferences.

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