

*...scientists fighting influenza*

**ESWI**

## 2015 activity report

# The European Scientific Working group on Influenza

(ESWI) is a group of twelve key scientific experts in influenza who have joined forces in the aim **to reduce the burden of influenza in Europe**. To realize that objective they have established structural partnerships with stakeholder organizations:



# ESWI's organizational development

A dynamic organisation, ESWI is continuously in search of the most valuable knowledge and fruitful cooperations. It also aims to attract decisive new members in order to maintain or even improve its coverage of the European influenza field. In this context it is interesting to note that Dr. Arnold Monto, Dr. Bruno Lina, Dr. Thomas Szucs and Dr. Selim Badur have stepped down from their positions as an ESWI member. ESWI's Board of Directors wish to express their profound gratitude for their valuable contributions to the realization of ESWI's mission. In order to safeguard ESWI's future as an active and decisive organization, four new (young) academics have been appointed to the Board of Directors:



Patricia Blank,  
*University of Zurich,  
Switzerland*



Susanne Herold,  
*University of  
Giessen Lung  
Centre, Germany*



Laurence Josset,  
*University of Lyon,  
France*



Edward C.  
Hutchinson,  
*University of  
Oxford, UK*



A full list of ESWI's members and associate members is available at  
[www.eswi.org/home/about-eswi/members-and-associate-members/](http://www.eswi.org/home/about-eswi/members-and-associate-members/)



# Towards an influenza coalition in Europe

## **European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases (ESPID)**

ESWI and ESPID have organized a joint symposium at the annual ESPID Meeting on 14 May 2015 in Leipzig. The debate followed a special format as the symposium title was: „Influenza Vaccination of Children: a Critical Appraisal in a Pro/Con Style Scientific Debate“. A report has been produced about this symposium: Robin Kobbe (Hamburg University Hospital) attended the session and has published a paper in the dedicated Riga edition of Vaccine.

 [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26386163](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26386163)

## **European Respiratory Society (ERS)**

ERS (Gernot Rohde, Stefano Aliberti) and ESWI (Ab Osterhaus, Peter Openshaw) have met in Amsterdam on 25 September 2015 to discuss the symposium programme in more detail. An attractive and scientifically sound symposium proposal has now been submitted to the ERS congress committee. Both Stefano Aliberti and Gernot Rohde are very confident that the joint symposium will be of major interest to the ERS audience. The symposium “Influenza and respiratory physicians” has been accepted and will take place during the ERS conference in London on Monday 5 September 2016.

## **European Public Health Association (EPHA)**

ESWI has been asked to review the influenza chapter in EPHA's new ‘vaccination briefing’, a general document on vaccination strategies, which is to be distributed to EPHA's 97 member organizations. Several substantial revisions have been made to the document, which are currently being processed by EPHA's Sascha Marschang.

## **International Society of Travel Medicine (ISTM)**

As yet, little attention has been paid to the role of influenza prevention in travel medicine. To mend this gap, a working group of ISTM and ESWI delegates has been established and the delegates have held their first preparatory TC on 16 November. The idea is to prepare a draft document on influenza vaccination recommendations or guidelines for travel medicine professionals. On behalf of ESWI, Dr. Marco Goeijenbier has agreed to prepare a draft paper and submit it to the group for further discussion by the end of February 2016. It is also agreed that a face-to-face working meeting will be organized at the occasion of the 6th Northern European Conference on Travel Medicine in London (1-4 June 2016).

## **European Forum for National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNNMA)**

ESWI has extended its partnership through the EFNNMA. Nurses and midwives can play a crucial role in increasing immunization rates. After all, they are well-placed to discuss immunization with patients and to provide tailored information based on the latest scientific evidence. In 2016, we will investigate the possibilities of further collaboration.

# Science Policy Flu Summit

To cope with a future pandemic outbreak of influenza, heightened readiness is needed as well as improved outbreak prevention of seasonal influenza in various risk groups. To address these urgent public health issues, ESWI has brought together the European influenza community in the fourth edition of the Science Policy Flu Summit. On 30 September 2015, 86 public health officials and decision makers gathered at the International Press Centre in the heart of the European Quarter in Brussels for a day of tailored lectures, Q&A sessions and networking.

Although the Summit had been designed to give an overview of the scientific advances in the influenza field and to provide a platform for the exchange information and ideas, **the main goal of the event was to develop an influenza action plan for Europe.**

Indeed, the lively debates have yielded a clear and practical roadmap, listing the most urgent actions that need to be taken in order to reduce the impact of influenza in Europe. In close collaboration with its partner organizations, ESWI is ready to facilitate the implementation of the action plan and it invites all stakeholders to put themselves forward to initiate or collaborate in the execution of the influenza roadmap.

*The next Science Policy  
Flu Summit will be held on  
28 September 2016 in Brussels.*



The conference report as well as the speakers' slide sets are available on  
[www.eswi.org/flusummit/](http://www.eswi.org/flusummit/)

# ESWI Influenza Conferences and Science Policy Interface

Since the first edition in 2002, ESWI has been organizing its influenza conferences every three years. Over the past years, they have grown into the largest European scientific conferences entirely dedicated to influenza. At the most recent edition (14-17 September 2014 in Riga), ESWI welcomed 700 participants from all over the globe. It gave the floor to the most renowned influenza scientists in order to showcase recent advances in basic science and the control and prevention of influenza, to stimulate the scientific debate on novel, unpublished research data and to advance our understanding of influenza by identifying new research routes.

Next to the traditional scientific programme track, the conferences provide a separate programme for public health officials (Science Policy Interface), which aims to translate the newest scientific data and to present good practices in the field of influenza policy. To that end, top experts bring a mixture of tailor-made lectures, case studies and specifically designed media. Ample time for questions and answers allows for lively debates. At the same time, the Science Policy Interface aims to bridge the gap between scientists and policy makers, enhancing interactions between them.

*The Sixth ESWI Influenza Conference will again be held in Riga, from 10 to 13 September 2017. Preparations have started in 2015 and will continue in 2016 and 2017.*





# Communication tools

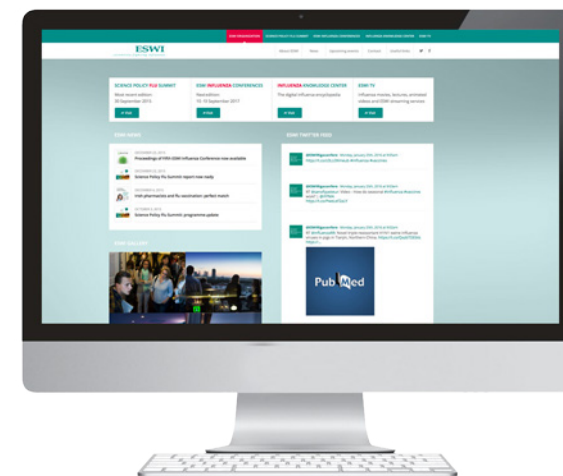
## ESWI web portal

ESWI proudly launched its brand new portal website in January 2016. Visitors of the [www.eswi.org](http://www.eswi.org) url can browse through our videos on various influenza topics in ESWI TV, get the information they need from our influenza knowledge center, stay informed about ESWI's triennial influenza conferences and the yearly Influenza Summits. And, of course, this website tells them all they want to know about ESWI itself.

ESWI is determined to expand and update the content on the portal in order to maintain relevance and authority. This will entail a lasting and resource-consuming endeavour.

## ESWI News Bulletin

ESWI manages and constantly updates a database of about 6,400 influenza stakeholders in Europe. ESWI is ready to use this platform in any flu-related educational project (see Participation in EU projects), as it is a highly flexible tool to reach the European flu field in just a few clicks. Another tool in ESWI's web-based communication strategy is its monthly newsletter (launched April 2015). The ESWI News Bulletin offers a selection of influenza-related articles collected from a range of media sources. The first issues have been received very well as they generated over 1,500 opens and 500 clicks. The Bulletin is hence a clever and cost-effective way to enhance ESWI's visibility in the influenza community.



# Participation in EU projects

ESWI is well-placed to assist international research consortia in bringing their findings to the heart of the society, emphasizing the importance of their work for the benefit of the people. ESWI is hence a partner in the communication & dissemination work packages of two major EU funded research projects:

**FLUNIVAC** (InFLUenza virus UNIVersal VACcine development program) is a unique consortium of various European SMEs, universities and an industry partner, which aims to pave the way to the development of a universal influenza vaccine. ESWI develops, edits and disseminates the annual FLUNIVAC newsletter to its list of influenza stakeholders.

 [www.flunivac.eu](http://www.flunivac.eu)



Platform for European Preparedness  
Against (Re-)emerging Epidemics

**PREPARE** (Platform for European Preparedness Against (Re-)emerging Epidemics) is an EU funded network for harmonized large-scale clinical research studies on infectious diseases, prepared to rapidly respond to any severe ID outbreak, providing real-time evidence for clinical management of patients and for informing public health responses. In 2015, ESWI contributed to the creation of a Virtual Learning Centre as a separate platform and domain. Sixteen educational videos had been edited from the recordings made at the ESWI Riga conference (2014) and the Science Policy Flu Summit (2015). These videos - on various topics such as new influenza vaccines and antivirals, flu vaccination of children and pregnant women, H7N9 and other flu threats, and the economic and social benefits of flu vaccination - have all been uploaded to the VLC.

 [prepare.ersnet.org](http://prepare.ersnet.org)



# Country Influenza Stakeholder Networks: Turkey

The idea for the Country Influenza Stakeholder Networks (CISN) is to support and strengthen national public health activities. The first CISN were established between 2003 and 2005 in Sweden, Germany and Poland. From 2008 onwards, ESWI facilitated the establishment of CISN in Finland, the Czech Republic and Portugal. And in 2011, ESWI turned to Turkey and Austria. The Turkish network, called Grip Platformu, was launched in the last weekend of September 2011 with a first network meeting, followed by a separate conference for GP's and pharmacists in Istanbul. Since then, the network's policy plan and action plan had been carried out with ESWI providing expert input, strategic advice and logistical support wherever needed. In November 2015, the Grip Platformu members have elected Hülya Akan (president of the Turkish Society of General Practitioners) as the new chairman of the group, turning the Grip Platformu into an autonomous, decisive and sustainable organization. In the mean time,

ESWI had submitted the Grip Platformu logo and name for official registration. Since both are now registered international trademarks, owned by ESWI, they cannot be used by any organization (be it profit or non-profit) without ESWI's consent. Of course, ESWI remains ready to assist the network whenever necessary.



2016 will again be an interesting, busy and fascinating year for ESWI. To realize its aims, however, ESWI fully relies on the loyal and active support of its members, partner organizations and sponsoring companies. Their joint forces are the strength of ESWI, allowing the organization to play its unique role in the influenza field.

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