EFCC is still a young but dynamically developing regional federation of IFCC formed by the General Assembly of national societies of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine across Europe in 2007 after merging FESCC and EC4 into one single European Federation (www.efcclm.eu – About the EFCC). Current membership of EFCC comprises the national societies of the following 39 countries: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kosovo (provisional member), Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and Ukraine.

**STRUCTURE AND CONSTITUTION**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

EFCC is governed by its General Assembly formed by representatives of full member national societies. EFCC held a General Assembly (GA) in April 2010 in Corfu, in association with the IFCC General Conference. The next GA will be held in conjunction with the IFCC Wordlab-Euromedlab 2011 in Berlin, where the new Executive Board and the venue of Euromedlab 2015 will be voted upon.

Attendees of the 2010 EFCC General Assembly in Corfu
The GA was very active in 2010. It revised the Statutes of EFCC and introduced an electronic voting system to improve the efficiency and timeliness of communications and decision making within the organisation [1]. National Society membership contributed to and accepted the Strategic Objectives and Action Plans of EFCC for the term of 2010-2011 [2]. The GA was consulted on a number of important topics related to the position of EFCC and approved the following key documents:

- Memorandum of Understanding and Working Agreement between the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry & Laboratory Medicine and the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine [3];
- Guidelines and Rules for Organising the IFCC-EFCC Euromedlab Congresses of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine [4];
- European Name of the Profession.

EXECUTIVE BOARD AND COMMITTEES

EFCC’s operations are run by an Executive Board (EB) which – as part of the IFCC-EFCC agreement – is administratively supported by the EFCC office hosted in IFCC’s Office in Milan. Current officers of the EB for the two year term of 1 July 2009 – 30 June 2011 are as follows:

- President Andrea Rita Horvath (Hungary)
- President-Elect Ian Watson (United Kingdom)
- Past President Vic Blaton (Belgium)
- Secretary Hans van Pelt (The Netherlands)
- Treasurer Peter Schuff-Werner (Germany)
- Member-at-Large Kari Pulkki (Finland)
- Member-at-Large Mario Pazzagli (Italy)
- Members of the Advisory Board Michael Hallworth (UK), Rob Jansen (NL), Gerard Sanders (NL), Christine Tarrajat (EDMA)

The EFCC EB met twice in 2010, on 16-17 April in Corfu, in conjunction with the IFCC General Conference, and 13-17 October in Lisbon, in conjunction with the 1st EFCC-UEMS European Conference on Laboratory Medicine in Healthcare. Due to the heavy workload and numerous ongoing activities the EB appointed Ana-Maria Simundic as deputy secretary of EFCC. In 2010 Lisa Ionescu and Silvia Cattaneo have supported the EFCC office in Milan and their professional contribution to managing EFCC’s affairs is greatly appreciated.

EFCC has six Committees (C) which carry out their tasks via Working Groups (WG) or Task-and-Finish Groups (TFG). The current structure and a detailed description of key activities are described on EFCC’s website (www.efcclm.eu – About the EFCC – Structure). Chairs of Committees and Working groups in 2010:

Scientific Committee: Sverre Sandberg (Norway)
- WG Cardiac Markers Paivi Laitinen (Finland)
- WG Creatinine Standardisation Joris Delanghe (Belgium)
- TFG Preanalytical Congresses Ana-Maria Simundic (Croatia)
- WG Guidelines Wytze Oosterhuis (The Netherlands)
- WG Biological Variation Bill Bartlett (UK)
- WG Test Evaluation Andrea Rita Horvath (Hungary)
- WG Postanalytical EQAS Sverre Sandberg (Norway)
- SPIDIA Project Group Mario Pazzagli (Italy)
- EUMETALAB Project Group Michael Neumaier (Germany)

Education and Training Committee: Elizabeta Topic (Croatia)
- WG Congresses and Postgraduate Education Elizabeta Topic (Croatia)
- WG Distance and e-Learning Damien Gruson (Belgium)

Quality Management Committee: Jean-Claude Libeer (Belgium)
- WG Accreditation and ISO/CEN Wim Huisman (The Netherlands)
- WG IVD Jean-Claude Libeer (Belgium)
KEY ACTIVITIES

The EFCC had a very busy year of fulfilling all the ambitions of its strategic goals and organizing the numerous tasks that were set out in its Action Plan [2]. Key activities and achievements in 2010 are summarised below.

ORGANIZATION AND LIAISON

- The relationship and collaboration with IFCC was strengthened and formalised by signing the IFCC-EFCC Memorandum of Understanding and Working Agreement [3].
- IFCC and EFCC revised jointly the Euromedlab guidelines [4], and sent out a call for applications for the 2015 conference.
- EFCC strengthened its collaboration with UEMS (the European Association for Medical Specialists) and the two organisations developed a new joint regional conference policy and organised their first joint conference event in Portugal in 2010 [5].
- EFCC further strengthened and formalized its collaboration with the IVD industry. EFCC EB invited the Director General of EDMA into its Advisory Board and signed a Working Agreement with EDMA in October 2010. Formal collaborations and agreements were signed with a number of corporate members (Abbott, Beckman, Becton-Dickinson, Bio-Rad, Roche) to support specific projects or educational events.
Simone Zérah, chair of the EFCC Professional Committee and of the EC4 Register Commission, was elected to the Executive Board of CEPLIS (Conseil Européen des Professions Libérales, European Council of the Liberal Professions; www.ceplis.org) at its General Assembly in Rome on June 10, 2010. The new Board then elected her as one of the three vice presidents. CEPLIS is the only recognized inter-professional association representing the liberal professions at EU level and has close contacts with the European Commission [6].

EFCC officials represented the profession in policy or regulatory affairs at various EU Commission meetings. EFCC took part in three meetings of the EU Commission Exploratory Process on Medical Devices working parties and collaborated with the EC working parties on Research Priorities in the EU.

An important landmark in the ongoing strong collaboration with the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA) was EFCC’s official admission to Recognised Stakeholder Status in EA on 13 December 2010 [6].

EFCC strengthened its collaboration by co-organising scientific or educational events with other European scientific or clinical organisations, such as the European Society of Cardiology, the Federation of European Microbiology Societies, the European Atherosclerosis Society and the European Thrombosis Research Organisation.

EFCC officers fostered relationships with The Chinese Society of Laboratory Medicine which created the Sino-European cooperation in 2001 with FESCC, the predecessor of EFCC. EFCC participated at the China-EU Laboratory Medicine Conference on 5-7 September, 2010 Shenyang, China [6].

EFCC signed an agreement of collaboration with EQALM (European Committee for External Quality Assurance Programmes in Laboratory Medicine) and the first joint EFCC-EQALM meeting was held in Lisbon during the 1st EFCC-UEMS Conference.

**SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE**

The Cardiac Marker WG has performed a European collaborative survey in 2009-2010 and presented the results in Lisbon in a session entitled „How to evaluate cardiovascular risk?” A publication on the survey findings is being prepared. The WG will also present its findings at the Worldlab/Euromedlab 2011 in Berlin.

The Biological Variation WG developed a web site and a biological variation data simulation package has been published on this site (www.biologicalvariation.com/Tools.html) that allows users to look at the impact of varying biological variation data upon analytical goals, performance characteristics and reference change values.

The Guidelines WG carried out research on and develops laboratory guidelines for reflective testing. The WG created a website (www.reflectivetesting.com) which is being translated to English. The WG carries out research into the quality of guidelines with the intention to formulating recommendations for making guidelines for laboratory testing [7-10]. The WG contacted the European Task Force guidelines for cardiovascular disease prevention at the European Atherosclerosis Society and the European Society of Cardiology about potential involvement in joint guideline initiatives.

The Postanalytical EQAS WG is involved in international case vignette-based surveys on how general practitioners use and interpret laboratory test results and whether they follow evidence-based guideline recommendations in practice. Results of a former survey on microalbuminuria testing were published in 2010. [11]. A new postanalytical external quality assessment scheme was set up for for prothrombin time-INR monitoring and sent to doctors in 14 different countries in spring 2010. The project is carried out in cooperation with EFCC and EQALM. Results will be published in 2011.

The Test Evaluation WG held its first meeting in October 2010 in Lisbon. The group is preparing a scoping paper on biomarker evaluation and prepares an evidence based framework and supporting tools for testing the clinical effectiveness of diagnostic biomarkers for different applications. Some elements of the work have been presented at the Bergmeyer Conference in March 2010 and published in the conference proceedings [12]. The WG will present a session on test Evaluation at the Worldlab/Euromedlab Congress in 2011 in Berlin. The group’s activity is supported by Roche and it is collaboration between EFCC and AACB.
The Creatinine Standardisation WG aims to improve assay standardisation and to create an inventory of publications about problems related to creatinine standardisation. A position paper was submitted by the WG in 2010, which was accepted for publication [13].

A Preanalytical TFG was established and prepares the 1st EFCC-BD European Preanalytical Conference on 1-2 April 2011 in Parma, Italy (http://www.preanalyticalphase.org/). An opinion paper co-authored by all invited speakers was submitted to CCLM and will be published in April 2011.

The Science Committee delegated C Cobbaert to the AACC harmonization meeting. Conference report was published in EFCC News [6]. Proposals were made for a new WG on Harmonization which will be established in 2011 and will collaborate with similar groups at AACC and IFCC.

The SPIDIA Project Group is involved in an EU collaborative project on the standardization of the preanalytical phase in molecular biology testing (www.spidia.eu). The EFCC contributed to the development and implementation of the website for the SPIDIA applications. Within the framework of the project a ring-trial across Europe has been accomplished. Preliminary results were published in EFCC News [14].

For lack of EU funding, the EUMETALAB project group was terminated in 2010.

Science Committee members collaborate with the IFCC POCT committee and will deliver a session at the Berlin Worldlab/Euromedlab Congress.

The Science Committee chair was heavily engaged in developing the highly successful scientific program and the interactive sessions of the 1st EFCC-UEMS Congress in Lisbon. The Committee was also responsible for putting together the scientific program of the 1st European Preanalytical Conference to be held in Parma.

Members of the Committee have been involved in the promotion evaluation of the applications of the EFCC-Abbott Labs-are-Vital Award for excellence in outcomes research which will be first awarded at the Berlin Worldlab/Euromedlab Congress [6].

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

The highlight of the year was the 1st EFCC-UEMS European Conference on Laboratory Medicine in Healthcare on 13-16 October in Portugal, Lisbon. The full report can be viewed on the EFCC website and in EFCC's January 2011 Newsletter [5-6]. The 2nd European Conference will be held in Croatia in 2012.

The key educational event was the 10th anniversary of the EFCC Continuous Postgraduate Course in Clinical Chemistry on "New trends in classification, diagnosis and management of thrombophilia", held on 23-24 October 2010 in Dubrovnik, Croatia. This course was jointly organised with the European Thrombosis Research Organisation (ETRO) and a special issue of CCLM Journal was dedicated to review articles of the course, which was freely circulated to National Society membership [15]. The 11th EFCC Continuous Postgraduate Course will be on 22-23 October 2011 and will deal with the topic of inflammation.

On October 4-9, 2010, Belgrade hosted the 17th Congress of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine marking the 55th anniversary of the Serbian national society and held under the auspices of the IFCC, EFCC, BCLF. Simultaneously the 6th EFCC Symposium for the Balkan Region also took place, with a key focus on "Implementing Laboratory Automation, Quality and Efficiency" [6].

The 18th Meeting of the Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation in conjunction with the 3rd Albanian National Conference of Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine, was held on 22-25 September, 2010 in Tirana [14].

EFCC was represented in the Scientific Advisory Board of Worldlab and Euromedlab 2011. EFCC officers actively took part in shaping the program of this conference where four EFCC sessions will be presented.

The Committee developed the EFCC auspices’ policy and is working on establishing a system of EU CME crediting.
− The Distance and e-Learning WG organised the 2nd Symposium on Accreditation sponsored by BioRad, on the last day of the Lisbon EFCC-UEMS Congress in October 2010. The videoconference was held with the participation of the Czech national society in Prague.

− The WG delivered two webinars: one on PSA testing, which was delivered by Elsevier and with the support of Beckman. The other was on Natriuretic Peptides and was delivered by Adobe and supported by Bio-Rad. A series of further webinars are being planned for 2011.
QUALITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

− The Quality Management Committee collaborated with EDMA and the EU Commission working parties in revising the EU IVD Directive, with particular emphasis on “in house” assays [6]. The Committee issued statements with EDMA on diagnostic devices sold via the internet.

− An important landmark in the ongoing strong collaboration with the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA) was EFCC’s official admission to Recognised Stakeholder Status in EA on 13 December 2010 [6].

− The Accreditation/ISO-CEN WG continues effective collaboration with European Accreditation agency and ISO TC212 and CEN TC 140. The WG is involved in the revision of third edition of ISO 15189 and supports the implementation of the ISO 15189 standard.

− The Working Group collaborates with the EA Health Care Committee on assessor training.

− The WG is compiling guidance notes on the retention of documents in medical laboratories.

− A new survey has been prepared on critical value management in medical laboratories, in collaboration with AACB’s harmonization group. The survey will be circulated in Europe in the second half of 2011.

− The Accreditation/ISO-CEN WG represented EFCC at the IFCC-ILAC talks and it was agreed that IFCC will seek collaboration and set up joint projects with EFCC on relevant accreditation matters.

− The IVD WG aims to support the interpretation and harmonisation of the use of the EU IVD Directive in laboratory practice and during accreditation of laboratories in Europe.

− The IVD WG represented EFCC in the European Commission “Exploratory process on medical devices” in its Workstream 3 expert group on “Competitiveness and innovation”.

PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE AND WG EC4 REGISTER COMMISSION

− The Committee and its WG operate the EC4 Register of European Specialists of Clinical Chemistry (www.ec4register.eu) which is separately administered and funded by the EC4 Foundation. At the end of 2010 there were 2116 registrants and efforts continue to encourage more. Much effort has been expended on encouraging registrants to re-register at the end of the five-year registration period, especially as the first group required to re-register for a second five-year period starts in January 2011. All EU countries, apart from Malta, which is a Corresponding Member, are now represented on the Register Commission.

− Equivalence of Standards proposals were approved for medical specialists in Lithuania, Sweden and Latvia. Twenty five countries now have approval (6 for medical specialists only) with only two countries still to submit any Equivalence of Standards.

− A pilot project to automatically register individuals who are on the Dutch national society (NVKC) register onto the EC4 Register was started in 2010 and should be completed early in 2011. A similar project is being designed for the UK subject to the agreement of ACB members.

− The Guide to the Register was updated and published in Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine [16]. A French version of the Code of Conduct was also published [17].

− A small task group of National Representatives has been set up to revise the European Syllabus in 2011. It is planned to include competencies in the new version.

− The Committee and WG took part and presented talks at the European Meeting on Education in Laboratory Medicine and Recognition of Professional Qualifications, on 25-27 March 2010 in Warsaw.

− The Professional Committee and UEMS organized a joint survey on the practice of laboratory medicine in Europe and the preliminary results were presented at the EFCC-UEMS Congress in Lisbon in October 2010.

− Together with CEPLIS a survey was conducted on continuous professional development in laboratory medicine in Europe.

− Members of the Committee and the EC4 Register Commission had several meetings with European Commission officials about the Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications.
and are contributing to the review of the Directive. They also prepared a document on the importance of our profession in relation to patient safety.

EC4 Register membership (March 2010)

PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

− The Public and Professional Relations Committee has created EFCC’s PR strategy and portfolio, issued two EFCC Newsletters and promoted EFCC activities at a number of international events in 2010. EFCC News is now a quarterly regular edition with standard columns, open to National Societies, and is widely disseminated to membership in Europe and other partners worldwide.

− The EFCC website (www.efcclm.eu) has been modernised and updated and the new website will be released in May 2011 in Berlin.

− The official scientific journal of EFCC is Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM). EFCC has signed an agreement with the Publisher, Walter de Gruyter & Co. KG, in 2010.

− EFCC also signed another agreement with the Clinical Chemistry Journal of AACC. Free annual subscriptions were granted to 10 professionals in less developed European countries. Educational materials of the journal have been promoted to EFCC national societies and at various EFCC events.

AWARDS

Nominations for EFCC’s Roche Award to a clinical chemist who has made a major contribution to European Clinical Chemistry were sought from National Societies. The EFCC-Roche Scientific Award for Laboratory Medicine for 2011 will be awarded at the Worldlab/Euromedlab Congress in Berlin.

The EFCC-Abbott Labs are Vital Award for Excellence in Outcomes Research in Laboratory Medicine, was announced at Euromedlab in Innsbruck. The first award will be granted at the Worldlab/Euromedlab Congress 2011 in Berlin.

In sum, EFCC had a successful year in 2010 with lots of exciting scientific and professional events for which all EFCC officers, collaborative partners, the sponsors and EFCC’s national society membership are highly commanded. We look forward to similarly successful collaborations in 2011!

Andrea Rita Horvath
President, EFCC

EFCC Annual Report 2010
REFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS


