



Promotion of young scientific talent in Europe: European project NATURIMMUN promotes and teams up brilliant postgraduate students and postdocs from twelve countries

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Prof. Dr. Ulrike Köhl, Coordinator of the EU consortium NATURIMMUN at the Hannover Medical School in Germany, is satisfied. "The students have done their job really well". The weeks leading up to the third Summer School in Barcelona last October were very eventful for the members of the international consortium. The project is dedicated to the exploration of the natural immune response to cancer cells and viruses, and intends to use these results to develop novel cell-based therapies and technologies.

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The consortium met recently on two occasions and the young scientists from Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Albania, India, Mexico and the Netherlands were invited to present their results. "We have managed to achieve many of our goals much earlier than we had expected." commented the EU doctoral students at the Natural Killer Cell Symposium in Göttingen, Germany, in October 2015. It is important to note that, alongside the research results they presented on "natural killer cells" (NK cells), the European PhD students autonomously organized a high-level satellite symposium. Leading experts of virology, immunology and medicine such as Dr. Jeffrey

Miller and Dr. Sarah Cooley from the USA, Prof. Dr. Winfried Wels, Prof. Dr. Helmut Salih and Dr. Martin Treder from Germany as well as Dr. Antonio Perez-Martinez from Spain accepted the invitation and presented their latest clinical data and research to the audience. Their presence and the ensuing highly topical discussions gave the event an exciting atmosphere. The focus of the satellite symposium was on "trispesific antibodies" and "chimeric antigen receptor" to make NK cells specific in the attack against cancer cells. Thus therapies for leukemia patients could be sustainably improved in the future.

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The PhD students and postdocs then met at the NaturImmune consortium meeting, which took place in Barcelona, Spain. There, they were advised by their respective thesis committee on how to proceed with their projects. The Summer School in Barcelona also featured a very engaging and filled workshop with courses on international patent law.

"Each time we [European fellows] meet, it almost feels like a class reunion" says Alessa Ede Valverde da Silva of the Hannover Medical School while Prof. Dr. Ulrike Köhl adds: "It is nice to see, how more and more bridges are being built in

Europe." The students will soon get to meet again, this time - in April 2016 - in Amsterdam after first completing an intensive experimental phase for their respective dissertation topics.



Satellite Symposium in Göttingen



International patent law course in Barcelona