

NEWSLETTER

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http://euchis.org

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No. 48

Editorial

All hopes of a return to normality have been dashed by the continuing restrictions on public life and lock-downs in many parts of the world. At least we have useful tools for communicating with members of our society, such as virtual meetings and even newsletters. In the absence of a conference in 2021, EUCHIS now provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and facts on chitin and chitosans as well as general aspects of polysaccharides in the form of a series of scholarly seminars initiated and coordinated by Gregor Tegl (see page 3).

This edition of the Newsletter contains the reports and information about activities of EUCHIS since January 2021. A virtual Board meeting took place in February (page 4) and a virtual General Assembly in March 2021 (page 6). Membership numbers (page 11) decreased in 2020, one of the reasons may be the fact that a regular conference could not convene, due to the pandemic. Fortunately, our financial situation (page 12) is quite healthy and it was decided to offer small bursaries for students to aid in mobility in case of a planned visit to a host laboratory, as well as materials for studies (page 13). The Braconnot Prize remains open for nominations and granted conference travel supports for students remain valid.

The scientific activity of our Society members continues at a high level. Twenty reviews, 136 research papers, and 8 patent applications appeared during the last 12 months (page 14).

Finally, tables of contents are cited from four books which came to the attention of the Secretary. These are about bio-composites, consisting also of polysaccharides other than chitin/chitosan, as well as about drug delivery, and the fungal cell wall (page 25). Maybe, some of these are of interest for our readers.

With best wishes,

Bruno Moerschbacher, President Martin Peter, Secretary Münster and Bonn, April 18, 2021

EUCHIS Webinars

Webinar
Chitin / Chitosan
Series





University of Münster
Structure-function relationships
of chitosans: the pattern of N-acetylation

Graz University of Technology
Methods for the processing
and shaping of polysaccharide
based materials

JOIN via ZOOM

e-mail: euchis.online@gmail.com

The webinars will take place on the last Tuesday of a month, 11am (CET). They are open for the public.

April 27 (link: https://bokuvienna.zoom.us/j/97138344317)

Bruno Moerschbacher, University of Münster: Structure-function relationships of chitosans: the pattern of N-acetylation

Abstract: Chitosans are a familiy of polysaccharides differing in their degree of polymerisation (DP), fraction of acetylation (FA), and pattern of acetylation (PA). The former two structural parameters can now be analysed and controlled fairly well and "second generation chitosans" which are well defined in both DP and FA are becoming commercially available in sufficient quantities not only for research but also for the development of reliable chitosan-based products that make use of their reproducible biological activities. But this is not yet the case for the third parameter, PA. We will present our recent progress in the preparation and analysis of chitosan oligomers and polymers with defined, non-random patterns of acetylation, and on the role of PA in defining biological functionalities.

Rupert Kargl, Graz University of Technology: Methods for the processing and shaping of polysaccharide based materials

Abstract: Homogeneous polymer analogous derivatization reactions are useful for increasing the property range and applicability of polysaccharides. Silylation with silanes, or esterification with amino acids can be two interesting options to change the properties and add functionality to these polymers. Several examples are given for the derivatization of celluloses and dextran, and peculiarities are described for the purification and analysis of resulting products.

Despite chemical functionalization, polysaccharides can be shaped into certain forms, namely nanoparticles, nanometric thin film coatings, and three dimensionally printed objects. Particles containing drug conjugates are for instance obtained by nanoprecipitation methods using emulsions of hydrophobically derivatized polysaccharides. These structures could find applications in drug delivery.

Thin films of polysaccharides prepared by spin coating are of interest for basic studies involving interactions at the solid/liquid and solid/gas interfaces. Such well-defined films, down to a thickness of several nanometres on large substrates, can be prepared from cellulose derivatives or chitosan under reproducible conditions. Polysaccharides formed by this method can also be processed photolithographically.

Finally, current research is dedicated to the preparation of 3D printed objects comprising polysaccharides in dissolved or dispersed form. Among these are aqueous cellulose derivative solutions, and cellulose nanofibril dispersions, that can form structured objects with micrometre resolution using an extrusion-based process. Plenty of shapes and material combinations are accessible through a 3D printer (Bioscaffolder 3.2, Gesim, Germany, https://gesim-bioinstruments-microfluidics.com/bioprinter/). Some prospects are given for possible future research directions related to the processing and shaping of polysaccharide-based materials.

The next Webinars in 2021, save the dates:				
May 25	June 29	July 27	August 31	
September 28	October 26	November 30		

Minutes of the European Chitin Society Meeting of the Board

Time: Tuesday, Feb. 02, 2021, 11:00 – 12:00 CET

Location: Online via Zoom

Agenda

- 1. Opening (B. Moerschbacher)
- 2. Ascertaining of quorum
- 3. Chair of the meeting
- 4. Keeping of minutes
- 5. Results of questionnaire of Jan. 17, 2021
- 6. Report of the Secretary, membership figures and financial report (M. Peter)

- 7. Chitin/Chitosan conferences and International Federation of Chitin/Chitosan Societies (IFCCS) (B. Moerschbacher)
- 8. General Assembly: Agenda and
- 9. Any other business

Item 1

The assembly has been convened together with the agenda by e-mail on January 17, 2021. The agenda was approved by 15 Board members, one abstention.

B. Moerschbacher opened the meeting and briefly explained the main issue to be discussed, namely the situation of EUCHIS and its administration by the Board in times of the pandemic.

Item 2

Fifteen of 16 Board members were present in the virtual meeting, forming a quorum.

Item 3

The meeting is chaired by the President, Bruno Moerschbacher.

Item 4

Minutes shall be kept by the Secretary, Martin Peter

Item 5

The Bylaws of our Society stipulate that the Board shall be renewed every two years, through elections by the General Assembly of all EUCHIS members. Typically, this happens on the occasion of our biannual EUCHIS conferences. Under exceptional circumstances, this may happen after three years only, e.g. if a conference has to be postponed for one year. Our last EUCHIS conference, where we also convened the General Assembly and elected the current Board, was held in Seville in 2017, i.e. more than three years ago. Unfortunately, the 2019 conference had to be shifted to 2020 due to health reasons of the organizer, and then had to be further postponed due to the Corona situation. Whether or not we will be able to organize this conference in 2021 is not yet clear but in our opinion, this is rather unlikely. If we meet in 2022, the current Board will have been in place for five years.

However, it is not practical to elect a new Board under the present circumstances, and all 16 Board members agreed to continue in their function until a physical General Assembly and election of the new Board can be organized during the next EUCHIS conference, see Item 7. Continuation of the Board must be authorized by General Assembly, which shall be convened as an online conference within one month after distribution of these minutes and invitation to all members of the society.

Item 6

EUCHIS has presently 70 members, 3 less than March 2020. This includes eight members whose subscription is overdue for three years, meaning that their membership has formally terminated by Dec. 31, 2020. However, those will be kept on the mailing list, but are not entitled to vote in the General assembly and will not profit from other benefits, such as reduced conference fees (for numbers, see page 11).

The financial report 2020 was presented by the Treasurer, Katja Richter (see page 12). The bank charges of Deutsche Bank are exceedingly high. See Item 9 for a possible way ahead.

Nominations for the Braconnot prize can be submitted any time until September 30, 2021. It will be awarded in December 2021 and the awardee will be invited to give the Braconnot Plenary Lecture during the next EUCHIS Conference.

Granted travel awards remain valid for the next EUCHIS Conference.

Additional funds shall be made available for student bursaries, 3 times 300 Euro. Inmaculada Aranaz-Corral shall set up the guidelines for applications.

Item 7

The EUCHIS conference planned for 2020 is now postponed to 2022, provided that international travel will be unrestricted then. M. Peter will ask the web administrator to update the EUCHIS homepage.

Conference schedules will have to be revised, because all regional conferences are postponed, piling up now for 2022. Harmonization of international and regional chitin conferences by an International Federation of Chitin and Chitosan Societies (IFCCS) is presently discussed between members of the IFCCS interest group which convened in Osaka, 2018.

In order to keep communication and exchange of scientific ideas and achievements alive in the absence of conferences, a series of monthly online seminars shall be created. These will consist of short presentations given by a student and a senior scientist in each seminar. Topics shall not be strictly limited to chitin and chitosan but can include polysaccharides in general, highlighting any impact on and from chitin/chitosan science. Coordination shall be in the hands of Gregor Tegl who will collect the ideas for thematic sessions and set up a schedule. He will be assisted by the Secretary as required.

Item 8

A virtual General Assembly will be organized around the middle of March. The invitation and agenda shall be distributed by the Secretary at least four weeks in advance.

Item 9

Fiscal situation of EUCHS: The society was inaugurated in 1992 and registered as a "Societé non-lucrativ" at the Département Rhône in the Prefecture of Lyon. At that time, opening of a bank account was a formality. The laws changed since then, and banks demand now a tax number for an association, to be assigned to the account. Furthermore, bank handling charges are often lower for non-profit than for commercial organizations, some banks even do not charge for keeping an account of a non-profit organization. It would be advantageous for EUCHIS to be registered as a non-profit organization with a tax number in France as the seat of the society. Laurent David will find out the requirements for official registration of EUCHIS as a non-profit organization with a tax number in France.

Bruno Moerschbacher closes the meeting and thanks all participants for attending and valuable comments.

Münster and Bonn, Feb. 05, 2021 B. Moerschbacher M. Peter

Minutes of the European Chitin Society General Assembly

A General Assembly (GA) of the European Chitin Society was held on March 16, 2021, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30, CET. Because of current restrictions by the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was organized as a virtual event via Zoom.

Twentyeight members of EUCHIS, including six members of the Committee of the Managing Board and seven members of the Board, attended the meeting (see page 10).

Ballots were held by show of hands or in secret by electronic means. Votes of two associate members and one attendant not in good standing are not counted.

Agenda

- 1. Opening
- 2. Chair of the meeting
- 3. Keeping of minutes
- 4. Approval of the Agenda
- 5. Report of the President
- 6. Report of the Secretary (M. Peter)
- 7. Membership figures
- 8. Financial Report 2020
- 9. Discharge of the Managing Board

- 10. Confirmation of the Board
- 11. EUCHIS Seminar Series
- 12. Budget 2021: Braconnot Prize and Student bursaries
- 13. Conferences and International Federation of Chitin/Chitosan Societies (IFCCS)
- 14. Any other business

Item 1

The President, Professor Moerschbacher, welcomed the participants and opened the meeting.

Item 2

The meeting shall be chaired by The President, Professor Moerschbacher. There were no objections. Prof. Moerschbacher accepted to chair the meeting.

Item 3

Minutes shall be kept by The Secretary, Professor Peter. There were no objections. Prof. Peter accepted to keep the minutes.

Item 4 – Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was distributed to all EUCHIS members on February 12, 2021. No requests for additional items or corrections were received. The Agenda was approved unanimously.

Item 5 – Report of the President

The President commented briefly on the current situation of EUCHIS in times of the pandemic. The last GA convened in June 2017 during the 13th EUCHIS conference in Seville, Spain. The next GA, scheduled for August 2019, was postponed to 2020, due to cancellation of the 14th EUCHIS conference in Cork, Ireland. It had to be postponed again due to COVID and was planned for September 2021 in Kazan, Russia, still on schedule. However, this conference had to be postponed further and is now tentatively planned for Spring 2022, pending widespread vaccination and permissive travel conditions. Thus, it was necessary to organize a GA soon after September 2020.

He then gave a brief summary of the Board Meeting (virtual), Feb. 02, 2021, as well as on activities of EUCHIS since June 2017, all of which were discussed in more detail during the GA and are reported below.

Item 6 – Report of the Secretary

Newsletters # 40 - 47 appeared on a regular schedule during 2018 - 2020. They were uploaded to the website of EUCHIS and distributed to all members by e-mail. Members are invited to contribute more actively to the Newsletter, especially with focus on completed PhD thesis and ongoing non-confidential research items.

Initiated by Prof. Laurent David, most volumes of Advances in Chitin Sciences have now been digitalized and are available on the EUCHIS website, with the exception of some issues where the copyright could not yet be clarified.

Other tasks of the Secretary were maintaining the membership database, assisting the President in correspondence and preparation of documents for decisions, including planning of conferences, performing correspondence with members, including sending out notes for annual subscriptions and receipts for payments, and compiling annual records of members bibliography. Exchange of News with other, in particular Asian Chitin/Chitosan Societies are developing smoothly, albeit slowly.

Item 7 – Membership figures

EUCHIS presently counts 62 members in good standing (see page 11). Membership of eight subscribers were terminated because of failure to pay the annual fee for more than three years, including three with invalid e-mail and physical address.

Item 8 – Financial Reports

The financial report 2017 was published in Newsletter # 43 (December 2018), reports for 2018 and 2019 in Newsletter # 46 (May 2020). The financial report 2020 was presented to the GA by the Treasurer, Katja Richter (see page 12). All Financial reports had been audited by the vice-treasurer and by the secretary who examined the account statements and testified that all income and expenses were in accordance with the statutes, and factually and arithmetically correct.

The financial reports were approved by the General Assembly (secret ballot: pro 22 – abstention 3 – contra 0).

Item 9 – Discharge of the Managing Board

It is proposed to discharge the Managing Board of Directors. The General Assembly approves the discharge of the Managing Board (secret ballot: Pro 16 – abstention 6 – contra 0). On behalf of all the members of the Managing Board, the Chairman thanked all those present for their approval and the confidence placed in the Board.

Item 10 - Confirmation of the Board

As outlined in the invitation to the GA, Appendix 3 (Feb. 12, 2021), the Board proposed to continue with the administration of EUCHIS with its current composition until a physical meeting is possible, meaning that a new Board shall be elected during the next EUCHIS conference. Pending on approval of the GA, all 16 Board members declared their consent to remain in office by e-mail in advance of a (virtual) Board meeting which convened on Feb. 2, 2021 (Minutes to be published in the next Newsletter, #48). Several EUCHIS members gave their consent in the GA discussion, and there were no objections (secret ballot: pro 25 – abstention 0 – contra 0). The Board members will continue, with functions as listed in the homepage of EUCHIS (http://euchis.org).

Item 11 - EUCHIS Seminar Series

Upon initiative by Gregor Tegl, a series of monthly video seminars (Webinars) with thematic focus on chitin/chitosan, but also including general aspects of glycoscience, will be offered to students and researchers. The audience is not restricted to EUCHIS members and is open for all interested researchers worldwide. Accounts on Twitter and gmail were established for communication, and news shall be posted to all EUCHIS members by personal e-mail messages through the office of the Secretary.

A proposal was made during the GA by our former president Prof. Sevda Senel to organize a webinar on the specific topic of chitosan applications for drug or vaccine delivery with special emphasis on Covid 19. Prof. Inmaculada Aranaz Corral and Prof. Carla Caramella offered their support in planning and organizing this event which might be offered in collaboration with other relevant scientific societies.

Item 12 - Budget 2021: Braconnot Prize and Student bursaries

The treasurer, K. Richter, gave an outlook on estimated income and expenses in 2021. Reserves must be kept for expenses occurring in advance for the organization of the next EUCHIS conference, as well as for the Braconnot Prize and travel grants for students. A new position in the budget appears in form of student bursaries, granted for use in 2022. Details are published on the Website as well as in this Newsletter (see page 13).

Item 13 - Conferences

The President informed about the future of regional and international conferences. Contacts with representatives of regional and national Chitin/Chitosan societies had been initiated in Osaka, 2018. With the goal to harmonize regional and international conferences and to avoid overcrowding, a schedule for International Chitin/Chitosan Conferences is presently discussed. Due to postponing of all conferences since 2020, a situation may arise that too many meetings could be planned for 2022. The official contact in Asia for international conferences is Professor Hiroshi Tamura, Kansai University, Osaka. Communication is also through the office of the Japanese Society for Chitin and Chitosan (JSCC).

Prof. Svetlana Bratskaya and Prof. Mar Masson confirmed their willingness to organize the next EUCHIS meetings in Kazan, Russia, and Ireland, respectively.

The issue of a virtual EUCHIS conference was raised in the discussion. Though not generally favored, it was considered for the case that a physical meeting would not be possible in 2022. A hybrid format combining online and onsite attendance is likely to become the standard for many conferences in future.

Item 14 – Any other business

No other items were raised.

The Chairman closed the General Assembly. He thanked the attendants of General Assembly for their participation and their constructive contributions in the discussions.

Bonn and Münster, 20.03.2021

Bruno M. Moerschbacher, President Martin G. Peter, Secretary

General Assembly, March 16, 2021 Appendix 1: Attendants

Board Members

1.	Moerschbacher	Bruno	active
2.	Aranaz Corral	Inmaculada	active
3.	Bratskaya	Svetlana	active
4.	Richter	Katja	active
5.	Cabrera-Escribano	Francisca	active
6.	Peter	Martin G.	active
7.	David	Laurent	donor
8.	Eijsink	Vincent	active
9.	Goñi Ramos	Oscar	active
10.	Goycoolea	Francisco M.	donor
11.	Skorik	Yuri	active
12.	Struszczyk	Marcin Henryk	active
13.	Tegl	Gregor	active

Members

14.	Andersson	Mats	active
15.	Caramella	Carla Marcella	active
16.	Christensen	Bjoern E.	active
17.	Espasa Valdepeñas	Anna	student
18.	Feuillat	Jean	collective
19.	Margoutidis	Georgios	student
20.	Másson	Már	active
21.	Osorio-Madrazo	Anayancy	active
22.	Richter	Torsten	active
23.	Varlamov	Valery	active
24.	Weiss	Ingrid	active
25.	Wunder	Anke	active

Associates and Guests

26.	Madhuprakash	Jogi
27.	Mirajkar	Shriram
28.	Senel	Sevda

General Assembly, March 16, 2021 Appendix 2: Membership Numbers (Feb. 02, 2021)

	donor	collective	active	associate	student	Sum
2020-03-31	7	6	43	7	10	73
Unpaid 3 years	-	1	4	1	2	8
Unpaid 2 years	-	-	-	1	2	3
Unpaid 2020	-	2	12	1		15
Paid 2020	7	3	25	3	6	44
2021-01-26	7	5	37	5	8	62
±	0	-1	-6	-2	-2	-11

Members by Country

Country	Active	Collective	Donor	Student	Associate	Total
Austria	1					1
Belgium		1	1	1		3
Canada					1	1
France	3	2	2			7
Germany	11		2	2		15
Greece				1		1
Hungary		1				1
Iceland	1				1	2
India					2	2
Ireland	1				1	2
Italy	4					4
Netherlands				1		1
Norway	3					3
Poland	3					3
Portugal				1		1
Russia	5					5
Spain	3			2		5
Sweden	1					1
Switzerland		1				1
Turkey			1			1
U.K.			1	1		2
Total	36	5	7	9	5	62

General Assembly, March 16, 2021 Appendix 3: Financial Report 2020 and proposed Budget 2021

Balance per 31.12.2019			11.092,70
Income			
	Member Subscriptions	2.045,50	
Total Positiva			2.045,50
Expenses			
	Internet Expenses	-632,38	
	Bank Charges	-161,22	
Total Expenses			-793,60
Balance per 31.12.2020			12.344,60

Budget Plan for 2021

Balance forward	12.344
Member Subscriptions	1.500
Bank Charges	-180
Internet Expenses	-650
Reserve for conference support	-5.000
Reserve for Braconnot Prize	-1.000
Reserve for student travel support	-1.500
Reserve for unexpected expenses	-2.000
Balance	3.514

EUCHIS STUDENT BURSARY CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

EUCHIS will award a bursary of 300 euros each to three EUCHIS student members.

Eligibility:

- All EUCHIS student members are welcome to apply for an EUCHIS bursary.
- Possible sponsored activities include: Conference fees, short research/training stays (stays in laboratories of junior and senior EUCHIS members will be preferentially treated), courses, workshops, textbooks and scientific software, or any other activity that could be considered to support the scientific work of the applicant.

Required Documents:

- Full name, address (residential and institutional), contact (e-mail), short C.V. (inc. list of publications, if any)
- Motivation letter describing the activity to be carried out and explaining how it will contribute to improve the scientific career
- Supporting letter of supervisor (only for graduate and PhD students)
- Copy of student ID (only graduate students) or prove of date that PhD was awarded within in the last two years (2019, 2020)
- Declaration of commitment to accept and observe the statutes of EUCHIS
- Declaration of acceptance of the conditions of the bursary

Deadline:

- The deadline for submission of application is September 30, 2021.
- All applications will be reviewed by two Board members appointed by EUCHIS Directive Board. In case of a tie, the vote of a third Board member will be requested. Applicants will be informed about the decision by November 30, 2021.

Conditions:

- EUCHIS student membership must be active for a minimum of two years 2020-2021.
 Applicants registering for membership after publication of this call shall pay a two-year student membership subscription (32 EURO). The funds must be used within 12 months of the date of authorisation.
- Successful applicants must sign a receipt upon reception of the bursary. Awards will be
 paid by bank transfer. Proof of realisation of the activity must be sent to the Secretary
 (martin.peter@uni-potsdam.de) within 30 days after concluding the activity. Lack of this
 documentation will exclude the person from any future EUCHIS support.
- The EUCHIS bursary must be acknowledged on any paper, thesis, etc. deriving from the action.
- After the Bursary action is completed, the student will be invited to submit a short non-confidential report which shall be published in the Newsletter.

Members Bibliography March 20, 2020 - March 20, 2021

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