

The 16th European Student Colloid Conference: June 18-22, Florence, Italy.



The 16th European Student Colloid Conference was organised by the University of Florence, Centre for Colloids and Surface Science (CSGI). Following the tradition of these meetings, the bulk of the organisation was carried out by a team of PhD students. The Florence team, which was extremely well chaired by Monica Tonelli, did a brilliant job! The “behind-the-scenes” local academic was Professor Debora Berti (the immediate Past-President of ECIS).

The meeting was held in the auditorium of a former monastery, Sant’-Apollonia, located in the centre of Florence. This proved to be a beautiful setting, as the picture below shows.



123 students attended the meeting, from 26 countries. This included the following 5 countries from outside Europe: Japan (4 students), Turkey (2 students), Israel (1 student), Saudi Arabia (1 student) and Kazakhstan (1 student). The European countries sending the most students were: Italy – not surprisingly, as the host country (23 students), the UK (17 students), Germany (15 students), France (9 students) and Russia (8 students). There were 50 lectures and 71 poster presentations by students (2 students did not present). In addition there were 7 overview-style lectures by senior academics. We were particularly pleased to welcome Associate Professor Chiara Neto from the University of Sydney, as one of the senior speakers. She was representing our sister organisation, the Australian Colloid and Interface Society's (ACIS), whose student meetings will celebrate their 50 years anniversary next February. A formal agreement is being put in place between ECIS and ACIS to sponsor, with financial assistance, a prize-winner from each of the two biennial student meetings to participate in the next meeting organised by the other society.

In addition to the scientific programme, there was a welcoming reception held on the Sunday night before the meeting. Also an excellent and informative 2-hour walking tour around the famous sites in central Florence was organised on the Wednesday afternoon (in groups of about 20 persons). This was followed in the evening by the conference dinner, held at the splendid "Osteria dei Baroncelli" restaurant (the former residence of the noble Baroncelli family in Florence)

In addition to ECIS, the *Società Chimica Italiana*, *Universitas Florentina Studiorum* and the CSGI (our hosts), sponsorship was very kindly provided by the following companies: Procter and Gamble, Alfatest and Biomérieux.

The prizes were presented on the last morning, just before the closing ceremony. There were 3 groups of prizes: (1) the Procter and Gamble Awards for the "Best Young Women in Colloid Science 2017", one for an oral presentation (Silvia Fogli, 500 €) and one for a poster (Andreea Campu, 500 €). These awards were judged by the two P&G staff who attended the meeting and an academic from the University of Florence; (2) the ECIS sponsored prizes for the best oral presentation (Anaïs Chalard, who will go to an Australian meeting with help from ACIS – see the earlier discussion), and for the best poster (Nandi Vrancken, who was presented with an external hard disk drive). These awards were judged by the senior academics attending the meeting; (3) the local student organising committee made the following "fun" awards: first registered student award (Azizul Hakim); most "interesting" correspondence award (Mariana Cardoso); best question award (Raymond Rammello); most elegant speaker award (Khaled Althubeiti); best photography award (Ross Jagers).

The whole meeting was an outstanding success, and congratulations must go to all those involved in the organisation. We are already making plans for the next meeting, to be held in 2019. Please consult the ECIS website for details.

Professor Brian Vincent (University of Bristol, UK)