SPECIAL EDITION:
COUNTRY LIAISONS

MEET THE COUNTRY LIAISONS

COUNTRY LIAISONS IN ACTION: PROMOTING EMEUNET

EMEUNET: A GROWING COMMUNITY
Dear young rheumatologists and researchers in rheumatology,

In this issue of EMEUNews, we are happy to present to you the ambassadors of EMEUNET throughout the EULAR countries: the Country Liaisons.

Who are they and what do they do?
Going through the pages you will get to know a community of enthusiastic young clinicians and/or researchers working in our fascinating field of Rheumatology. They have all taken it upon themselves to actively support the aims of EMEUNET and to represent EMEUNET in their countries. Through them, the information and educational opportunities offered by EULAR / EMEUNET find their way to the ones they are targeted for: the young fellows.

This current Newsletter is also an acknowledgement of the essential role played by the Country Liaisons in the growth and development of EMEUNET. The strength of our community lies not only in its numbers but also in its cohesion and engagement, all hardly possible without the Country Liaisons’ tireless support.

In the EMEUNET Country Liaison working group, we work closely together with the Country Liaisons. We warmly thank all our current as well as former Liaisons for their wonderful and inspiring work!

If this is the first time that you hear about EMEUNET and/or the Country Liaisons, we invite you to read this newsletter and join us! Find your national Liaison, get in contact with him/her or directly speak to any EMEUNET member and become an active member of EMEUNET! The Country Liaisons rotate every 2-3 years, you could be next!

We appreciate everyone’s enthusiasm and willingness to support EMEUNET’s initiatives, so do not hesitate to get in touch.

We hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter. Questions or comments are always welcomed!

On behalf of the Country Liaison Subgroup,
Diane van der Woude, Elena Nikiphorou, Alessia Alunno, Marlies van der Goes, Marcin Milchert, Anna Moltó and Rucsandra Dobrota

On behalf of the Newsletter Subgroup,
Alessia Alunno and Xenofon Baraliakos
WELCOME TO OUR NEW COUNTRY LIAISONS
2014 - 2015

Vahan Mukuchyan, MD - Armenia

Vahan graduated from the Medical School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece in 2007. Since 2013, he worked at random medical posts in the Armed Forces of Republic of Armenia. He is currently a 2nd year Rheumatology Resident in the Rheumatology department of Erebouni Medical Center of Yerevan. His scientific interests focus on Adamantiades-Behcet's Disease, Familial Mediterranean Fever and vasculitis.
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Christian Dejaco, MD PhD – Austria

Christian is a consultant and Assistant Professor at the Medical University Graz. His main research interests are the value of ultrasound in psoriatic arthritis, clinical research on polymyalgia rheumatica and translational research on T lymphocyte senescence in Rheumatology.
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Anne Troldborg, MD PhD - Denmark

She finished her medical degree at the University of Aarhus in 2007 and basic training in surgery and internal medicine in 2010, and then began her specialist training in Rheumatology. She is currently doing a PhD in innate immunity and SLE with special focus on the complement system. Her fields of interest include immunology, SLE and CTDs. She teaches medical students at the university of Aarhus and partakes in the evaluation and improvement of the rheumatologic departments in Denmark responsible for training future specialists in rheumatology, led by the Ministry of Health in Denmark.
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Camille Souffir, MD - France

Camille graduated from Paris Descartes Medical School in 2011. She is currently a resident in rheumatology and a master degree student in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the research unit of the Rheumatology department (Pr Dougados) in the Cochin Hospital. Her main areas of interest are epidemiology, osteoporosis, body composition in RA and ultrasound. She is responsible for communication at the Young Rheumatologists Section of the French Rheumatology Society.
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THE EMEUNET COUNTRY LIAISONS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW COUNTRY LIAISONS

2014 - 2015

Tamás Németh, MD PhD - Hungary

Tamás received his MD diploma at Semmelweis University in 2007. During his PhD period, he investigated the signaling pathways of innate immune cells and experimental autoimmune arthritis by a transgenic method, while he was involved in the education of Hungarian medical and dentist students in human physiology and instructed student researchers in a research lab. He started his medical residency in rheumatology in 2013, while continuing his work in research and education.

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Eimear Linehan, PhD – Ireland

Eimear completed a PhD in Immunology in Queen’s University Belfast in 2013. Eimear joined the field of Rheumatology in January 2014 and is currently a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the Dublin Academic Medical Centre, Ireland. Her research focuses on the discovery of biomarkers associated with the severity of Rheumatoid Arthritis.

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Sara Monti, MD - Italy

Sara is a trainee rheumatologist, currently working at the Rheumatology Department of the University of Pavia, Italy. She gained previous international experience with an elective program in Oxford. Her professional and scientific interests focus on systemic autoimmune diseases, vasculitides, arthritides and biological therapies.

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Marcin Milchert, MD PhD - Poland

Marcin is an internist and rheumatologist working as a clinician and research fellow in Pomeranian Medical University in Szczecin, North-West of Poland. As EMEUNET’s Country Liaison he is searching for a proper motivation for young rheumatologists in Poland to get involved in EULAR. As a clinician he’s especially interested in vasculitides and aging related diseases. As a researcher he’s happy to join both of his main interests, which simply means he’s the giant cell arteritis studies biggest fan.

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WELCOME TO OUR NEW COUNTRY LIAISONS

2014 - 2015

Richard Imrich, MD PhD - Slovakia
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Florian Klett, MSc - Switzerland
Florian completed his MSc (Project Management) at Birmingham City University in 2006 and started as project coordinator of the EULAR Standing Committee of People with Arthritis/Rheumatism (PARE) in Europe in 2007. He became involved in all aspects of patient centered work, and since 2014 he focuses most of his time on the coordination and development of the Network of Patient Research Partners and the development of the EULAR Young PARE subcommittee. In addition, he serves as Secretary of the FOREUM Foundation for Research in Rheumatology.
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Hakan Emmungil, MD - Turkey
Hakan completed his rheumatology training at the Division of Rheumatology, Department of Internal Medicine Ege University. He currently works at the Koç University Hospital in İstanbul. His professional and scientific interests focus on spondyloarthritis and Behçet's disease.
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Ellen de Langhe, MD PhD - Belgium

Since 2014, she works as a rheumatologist at the University Hospital Leuven in Belgium, with a special interest in systemic connective tissue diseases. She obtained her PhD in 2013, focusing on the role of BMP and Wnt signaling in mouse models of systemic sclerosis. Her areas of interest focus on pulmonary and skin fibrosis, animal models, BMP and Wnt signaling pathway. She is an EMEUNET working group member.
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Anastasia Tushina, MD PhD - Belarus

Anastasia completed her PhD program and is currently working as an assistant at the 2nd Department of Internal Diseases in the Belarusian State Medical University, Minsk (Belarus). Her field of interest in rheumatology concerns secondary amyloidosis in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.
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Ledio Collaku, MD - Albania

Ledio became a rheumatologist in 2003, and increased his skills in musculoskeletal ultrasonography during an international experience in Florence, Italy. He currently works at the University Hospital "Mother Teresa" and has a teaching position in the clinic of Internal Medicine. His PhD thesis focuses on cardiovascular involvement in rheumatoid arthritis.
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Samir Mehmedagic, MD - Bosnia and Herzegovina

He completed his training as an internist in 2011 in the Clinical Center of the University of Sarajevo, and is currently working in the Department of Rheumatology. His main area of interest is cardiovascular disease in rheumatic patients.
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Russka Shumnalieva, MD – Bulgaria
Russka currently works as a rheumatology specialist and PhD candidate at the Medical University, Sofia (Bulgaria). She joined EMEUNET in 2012 and contributes to the Educational and Newsletter Working Subgroup. Her major research work focuses on epigenetic changes and microRNA expression in rheumatic diseases.

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Marko Baresic, MD - Croatia
He completed his Internal Medicine residency in 2009 and his Rheumatology training in May 2012 at the University Hospital Center Zagreb in Zagreb, Croatia. He is currently working on his thesis about disease activity and damage indices in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus. His professional interests include SLE, systemic sclerosis (early and late stages of the disease), inflammatory myopathies and capillaroscopy in different rheumatic diseases.

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Antigoni Grigoriou, MD - Cyprus
She is currently a Rheumatology resident in London, working at Guy’s and St Thomas’ Hospital. Her fields of interest include inflammatory arthritis vasculitis/SLE, metabolic bone diseases as well as musculoskeletal ultrasound. She is responsible for the teaching of medical students. She is also about to complete an MSc in Rheumatology at Kings College London.

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Ladislav Šenolt, MD PhD - Czech Republic
Ladislav is a Professor of Internal Medicine at the 1st Faculty of Medicine and head of Department of Experimental Rheumatology at the Institute of Rheumatology in Prague. His main research interest is in biomarkers, miRNAs, novel cytokines and in the biology of synovial inflammation, as well as in the field of new therapis for inflammatory rheumatic diseases.

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Nino Gobejishvili, MD - Georgia

Nino is the Head of Georgian young rheumatologists union (SARG) and currently works at Aversi and Medical House Clinic, Tbilisi, Georgia. Her professional and scientific interests focus on the principles of immune tolerance and autoimmune disease.
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Tuomas Rannio, MD - Finland

Tuomas completed his medical training at the University of Kuopio and served as a general practitioner since 2007. In 2010 he started rheumatology training at the Jyväskylä Central Hospital. He is currently working on his PhD thesis, focusing on early rheumatoid arthritis treatment in usual clinical care.
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Sandra Tälli, MD - Estonia

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Axel J Hueber, MD PhD - Germany

Axel is a clinician and group leader in the Immunology and Rheumatology Department at University of Erlangen in Germany. He completed his PhD in immunology in Glasgow, UK in 2011. Following a year in industry in Immuno-oncology as a medical advisor he now focuses on cytokine biology in skin and synovial inflammation, but also on clinical areas such as adherence and patient communication.
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THE EMEUNET COUNTRY LIAISONS

ONGOING COUNTRY LIAISONS

Antonis Fanouriakis, MD - Greece
Antonis graduated from Athens Medical School and completed a MSc program in the University of Crete. He completed his residency in Rheumatology in the University Hospital of Heraklion and he is a PhD candidate working on neuropsychiatric SLE. His scientific interests focus on systemic autoimmune diseases, mainly pathogenesis and treatment of systemic lupus erythematosus.
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Gunnar Tomasson, MD - Iceland
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Doron Rimar, MD - Israel
Doron completed his medical training at the Ben-Gurion University, Beer-Sheva in 2001 and his residency in internal medicine in Haifa in 2007. His Rheumatology fellowship was completed in 2011. Since 2011 Doron serves as senior physician in the Rheumatology department at Bnai-Zion Medical center. His research interest includes biomarkers in FMF and systemic sclerosis. Doron's academic degree is a lecturer in the Ruth and Bruce Rappaport Faculty of Medicine, Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel.
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Nelly Ziadé, MD PhD - Lebanon
Nelly became a rheumatologist in 2006. She is currently practicing in Beirut as a full time rheumatologist at the University Hospital (Hotel-Dieu de France) and as a lecturer at the Saint-Joseph University. She got a PhD degree in Public Health–Epidemiology from Paris Descartes University (France) and Saint-Joseph University (Lebanon), and her main areas of interest are early inflammatory arthritis and spondylarthropathies.
nellyziade@hotmail.com
The Emeunet Country Liaisons

Ongoing Country Liaisons

Julija Zepa, MD - Latvia
Julija became a rheumatologist in 2011 at the University of Latvia. Since 2005 she has been working at the Center of Rheumatology in Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital; her areas of interest focus on rheumatoid arthritis and spondyloarthropathies (including genetic aspects of ankylosing spondylitis); she is also involved in education of primary care physicians and medical students.

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Diana Karpec, MD - Lithuania
Diana completed her MD at Kaunas University of Medicine, Lithuania. Currently she is a practicing rheumatologist in Vilnius University Hospital and actively taking part in clinical and research activities. Since 2013 Diana is a PhD student in Vilnius University working in the field of phototherapy in systemic sclerosis. She also gained international experience during training in the Florence University Hospital, Italy and in Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain. Her main interest area focuses on connective tissue diseases. She is an EMEUNET working group member.

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Maja Bojadzioska, MD - Macedonia
Maja Bojadzioska became a rheumatologist in 2010. She is currently working at the clinical hospital for rheumatology in Skopje. Her professional and scientific interests focus on patients with arthritis and postmenopausal osteoporosis. She also works as an assistant at the Faculty of Medicine in Skopje.

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Karen Cassar, MD PhD - Malta
Karen trained in Internal Medicine and Rheumatology in Malta with overseas experience in Bangor, North West Wales. She was awarded the Master’s Degree of Bioethics with Distinction 2011. The focus of her research was informed consent and shared decision making in Maltese patients with inflammatory rheumatic diseases. Karen was elected Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London in 2012. She is currently working as Consultant Physician at Mater Dei Hospital, Malta and is a part-time lecturer at the University of Malta.

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Elisabeth Lie, MD PhD - Norway
Elisabeth is currently working as a rheumatologist in training and postdoctoral researcher at Diakonhjemmet Hospital in Oslo, Norway. She is responsible for the conduction of the Norwegian multi-centre register study NOR-DMARD, which was the basis for her doctoral thesis. Elisabeth’s main research interests are treatment strategies and outcome measures in psoriatic arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and axial spondyloarthritis. She has also been involved in European register collaborations and has worked with the Swedish biologics register ARTIS.
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Dusan Mustur, MD - Montenegro
Dusan became a rheumatologist in 2010 in Belgrade, Serbia. He is currently working at Igalo Institute, Montenegro. He is also the Vice Dean for Science and Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Applied Physiotherapy, University of Montenegro.
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Elena Deseatnicova, MD PhD - Moldova
Elena became a rheumatologist in 2001. In 2007 she defended her PhD thesis “Clinical-Evolutionary Features, Indexes of Lipid Peroxidation and Antioxidant System in Gout”. Currently she has a teaching position as Associate Professor at the Department of Rheumatology of the State Medical and Pharmaceutical University Nicolae Testemitanu and works at the Clinical Municipal Hospital St. Trinity. The field of her scientific interest is osteoporosis, association of rheumatic diseases and other diseases possessing a metabolic background.
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Diane van der Woude, MD PhD - The Netherlands
Diane is a staff rheumatologist at the Leiden University Medical Center, where she is chief of the outpatient clinic. Her research interests are: autoantibodies, especially anti-citrullinated protein antibodies (ACPA), and risk factors for rheumatoid arthritis (RA) including genetic risk factors such as the human leukocyte antigen (HLA) alleles.
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Elisabeth Lie, MD PhD - Norway
Elisabeth is currently working as a rheumatologist in training and postdoctoral researcher at Diakonhjemmet Hospital in Oslo, Norway. She is responsible for the conduction of the Norwegian multi-centre register study NOR-DMARD, which was the basis for her doctoral thesis. Elisabeth’s main research interests are treatment strategies and outcome measures in psoriatic arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and axial spondyloarthritis. She has also been involved in European register collaborations and has worked with the Swedish biologics register ARTIS.
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THE EMEUNET COUNTRY LIAISONS

ONGOING COUNTRY LIAISONS

Vasco Romao, MD - Portugal
Vasco works as a Rheumatology Clinical and Research Fellow at the Lisbon Academic Medical Centre. In May 2014 he started his PhD training focusing on rheumatoid arthritis synovitis and pathophysiology. He was awarded a EULAR Scientific Training Bursary in 2014 for a 6-months Clinical Fellowship at Queen Mary University of London. His research interests are synovial pathobiology of RA, personalization of novel therapies and inflammatory rheumatic disease outcomes. He joined the EMEUNET Working Group and Website Subgroup in May 2014.
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Rucsandra Dobrota, MD - Romania
Rucsandra is a Rheumatology resident, currently working on her PhD on prognosis assessment in systemic sclerosis. She began her training in 2012 in the EUSTAR center 100, Bucharest, Romania, and continued since 2014 as a clinical/translational research fellow within the Division of Rheumatology, University Hospital Zurich, Switzerland. She is an active member of the EMEUNET Working Group and the current leader of the Country Liaison subgroup. Her main areas of interest are systemic sclerosis and other connective tissue diseases.
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Irina Starodubtseva, MD PhD - Russia
Irina is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Department of Internal Diseases of the NN Burdenko Voronezh State Medical Academy, Russian Federation. Her scientific interests are diagnostic and therapeutic approaches of secondary knee osteoarthritis in patients with rheumatoid arthritis, comorbidities in rheumatoid arthritis. Since 2008 she has been an Assistant Professor of the Department of Internal Diseases. Irina takes an active part in the department’s scientific activity and has authored 65 publications in the national and international press.
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Stephania Volpinari, MD - San Marino
Rheumatologist since 2008, Stefania trained at S. Anna Hospital - University of Ferrara, Italy. She currently works in the Republic of S. Marino’s Hospital, at the Division of Internal Medicine and at the Rheumatology Unit. Her main interest areas focus on rheumatoid arthritis, spondyloarthritis, connective tissue disorders, osteoporosis and ultrasound in rheumatic diseases.
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Johan Karlsson, MD PhD - Sweden
Johan is in training at Skåne University Hospital, in southern Sweden, aiming to become a specialist in Rheumatology by the end of 2016. During 2011-2013, he served as the junior doctors´ representative in the board of the Swedish Society for Rheumatology. He defended his PhD-thesis at Lund University, on the subject "Health economics and its measures in rheumatoid arthritis" in 2014. Research interests encompass rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and spondyloarthritis and focus on treatment outcomes, long-term disease outcomes, outcomes assessment and health economics.

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Mojca Frank Bertoncelj, MD PhD - Slovenia
Mojca graduated valedictorian 2005 in Medicine from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia and gained her PhD in 2010. From 2009 to 2013 she was a member of the EMEUNET Working group. She was awarded the Articulum Fellowship in 2011 moving to the Center of Experimental Rheumatology, Zurich, Switzerland, where she is currently a senior postdoctoral scientist. Her major research interests are positional memory and anatomic diversity of synovial fibroblasts, epigenetics, long noncoding RNA, SNP function, arthritis.

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Francisca Sivera, MD - Spain
Francisca is a rheumatologist since 2006. She trained at Hospital General Universitario of Alicante (Spain) and is currently working at the Hospital Universitario de Elda (Alicante). Francisca is currently a PhD candidate. Her main areas of interest focus on crystal arthropathies and on rheumatology post-graduate training. She was a EMEUNET working group member 2009-2011 and participated in the Education and Newsletter subgroup.

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Ivan Jeremic, MD - Serbia
Ivan is a doctoral research student at the University of Novi Sad. His scientific activity involves clinical research, currently in the first rheumatic pain, with focus on fibromyalgia.

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**THE EMEUNET COUNTRY LIAISONS**

### ONGOING COUNTRY LIAISONS

**Sonia Panchal, MD - United Kingdom**
Sonia is a trainee rheumatologist in the UK, currently working within the University Hospitals of Leicester. She is the chair of the BSR national trainees committee. Her interests within rheumatology include pregnancy and rheumatic disease, influence of ethnicity on disease and inflammatory arthritis.
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**Iuliia Biliavska MD, PhD - Ukraine**
Iuliia graduated in 2004 with an honors degree. In 2006 she became a rheumatologist and PhD student in the Department of Non-Coronary Heart Diseases and Clinical Rheumatology. In 2009 she defended her PhD-thesis focusing on the clinical value of anti-CCP antibodies in RA patients with different disease duration. In 2011 she undertook an Articulum Fellowship at the Medical University Vienna, Austria. At the moment her main research area of interest are comorbidity in rheumatic patients and musculoskeletal sonography.
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### A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR FORMER COUNTRY LIAISONS

The role of EMEUNET Country Liaison requires networking and communication. Every 2-3 years, the Country Liaisons are rotated, to offer the chance for other young fellows in each country to actively represent EMEUNET at a national level.

We warmly thank the Country Liaisons who handed on their role and their work to new fellows in 2014-2015, and count on their support for EMEUNET in the future!

Mary Connolly, Ireland
Jan Sznaid, Poland
Britta Maurer, Switzerland
Andrea Canicova, Slovakia
Cécile Gaujoux-Viala, France
Liana Ghukasyan, Armenia
Helga Radner, Austria
René Østgård, Denmark
Koray Tascilar, Turkey
EMEUNET has been advertised among young rheumatologists by Axel Hueber, CL for Germany, @ German Rheumadocs Fellows Meeting in 2013 and 2014.

Rucsandra Dobrota, CL for Romania, promoted EMEUNET @ Romanian Congress of Rheumatology in 2013 and 2014.

Young rheumatologists receive information about EMEUNET from Eimear Linehan, CL for Ireland, @ Irish Society of Rheumatology meeting in 2014.

EMEUNET Booth @ Dutch Congress of Rheumatology in 2013 and 2014 thanks to Diane van der Woude, CL for The Netherlands.

A round table @ Polish Congress of Rheumatology in 2014 to discuss EMEUNET, thanks to Marcin Milchert, CL for Poland.
COUNTRY LIAISON ACTIVITIES @ NATIONAL EVENTS

EMEUNET is present @ British Society for Rheumatology Congress in 2014 thanks to Sonia Panchal, CL for the United Kingdom.

For the first time EMEUNET has been presented @ Slovenian Rheumatology meeting in 2014 by Mojca Frank-Bertoncelj, CL for Slovenia. Thumbs up!

For the first time EMEUNET membership was encouraged @ Italian Society for Rheumatology meeting in 2014 thanks to Sara Monti, CL for Italy.

Nino Gobejishvili, CL for Georgia, supported EMEUNET @ Georgian Young Rheumatologists Union meeting and @ Georgian Autoimmune Arthritis Day in 2013 and 2014.

Nelly Ziade, CL for Lebanon, promoted EMEUNET @ Lebanon National Rheumatology Meeting in 2013 and 2014.
SEE YOU IN ROME!

2nd COUNTRY LIAISON MEETING
JUNE 12th 2015, ROME