

## Message from the FEPS President

Dear Members and Friends of FEPS,

Happy 2026! I hope the past year was exciting and productive. In this start-of-year newsletter, I'd like to update you on FEPS activities, both in federating European societies and as one of the four member societies of Europhysiology.

FEPS was a key contributor to the Frankfurt Congress. We participated in the Organizing Committee from autumn 2022 and played a central role in the International Scientific Program Committee, with seven FEPS representatives (including Susan Wray, IUPS President and FEPS Past President) and myself as co-chair alongside IUPS Secretary General Ulrich Pohl. I warmly thank all 32 committee members—especially Ulrich Pohl, a former FEPS President—for an outstanding collaboration that produced a stimulating, high-quality program with a strong balance of topics, countries, and genders. FEPS also had the honor of opening the Congress, thanks to the original bid to host the World Physiology Congress in Europe by then-FEPS President Markus Hecker, whom we thank again for this visionary idea.

For Frankfurt, FEPS announced ten travel awards for young physiologists, but only seven were granted due to the limited number of applications. This suggests that the FEPS website alone is not sufficient to reach young colleagues: I encourage each of us to actively share FEPS calls and opportunities with students and early-career lab members. The same applies to the Traveling Fellowships, supporting research visits within FEPS member societies outside the applicant's home country. I also invite members to help populate the Job Opportunities page by posting PhD and postdoctoral calls. Another major initiative is the launch of the European Accredited Physiologist (EURAP) program, led by Luis Monteiro Rodriguez, starting with a pilot endeavor involving seven Member Societies.

Looking ahead, the next European FEPS Congress, "*Physiology shaping the future*," will be held in Brescia (Italy) on September 8–11, 2026, in collaboration with the Italian Physiological Society (SIF). Brescia is a beautiful historic city in north-eastern Italy, easily reachable from Bergamo, Milan, or Verona airports, and close to outstanding destinations such as Lake Garda and other nearby art cities. The call for Symposia has just opened, and abstract submission will start in March. We anticipate an exciting program with 8 plenary lectures, 15 symposia, 12 oral presentation sessions, and posters. Fees have been kept as low as possible—especially for young physiologists—and FEPS will offer ten travel awards to attend. Importantly, FEPS will also launch the European Rising Star Award for young physiologists who have substantially advanced their field through groundbreaking research. The prize includes a €1,500 endowment, and the winner will give a lecture at the 2026 FEPS Congress in Brescia.

In closing, my sincere thanks again to Susan Wray, who has completed her Past President's term, for her major contributions and for strengthening the continuum between FEPS, Europhysiology, and IUPS. I also extend a warm welcome to our new President-Elect, Jolanda van der Velden (The Netherlands). I wish you all a very productive year, and I hope to meet many of you in Brescia next September.

Regards,  
Fabio Benfenati



## Executive Board of FEPS

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## News & Events

We welcome all news & events from FEPS member societies to be published in the Newsletter and on the website ([www.feeps.org](http://www.feeps.org)). Please send all information to the FEPS secretariat at [info@feeps.org](mailto:info@feeps.org)

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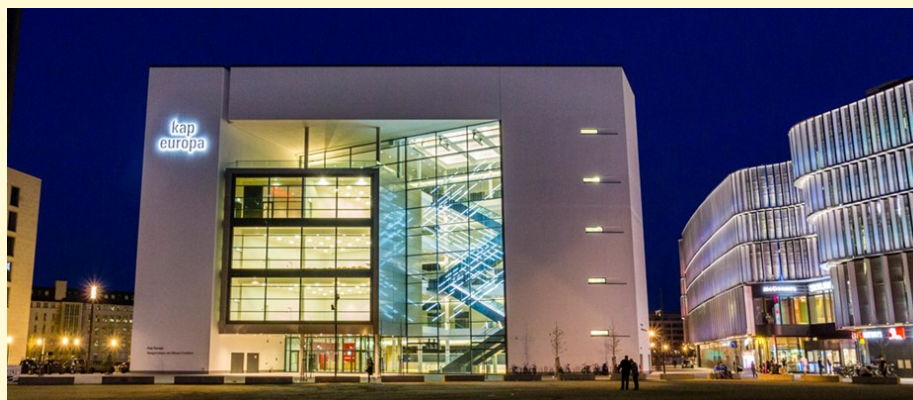
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## Brief Review

### Presence of FEPS

*Organizing Committee:* 4 members (from ExCo)

*International Scientific Program Committee:* co-chair and 7 members

### Statistics

*Participants:* 1,489

*Abstracts:* > 1000

*Nobel Plenary Lectures:* 2

*Special Lectures:* 8

*Keynote lectures:* 24

*Symposia:* 24

*Oral Communications sessions:* 27

*Poster Sessions:* 63 with more than 800 poster presentations

*Represented countries:* 70

*Gender balance:* 49% female, 45% male, 6% nd

## NOBEL LAUREATE LECTURES

### Sir Peter J. Ratcliffe (Oxford, UK)

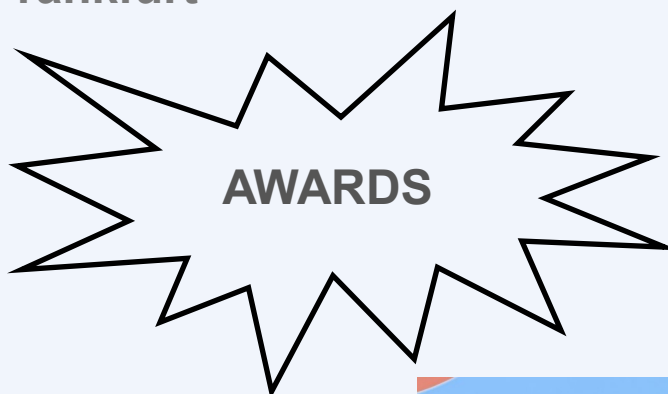
HIF Related Oxygen Sensing Mechanisms Underlying Physiologic Responses to Hypoxia

### Stefan W. Hell (Göttingen, Germany)

Molecule-scale resolution and dynamics in fluorescence microscopy



## Impressions from 2025 IUPS/Europhysiology 2025, Frankfurt



Seven early career researchers received FEPS travel awards (not all shown on photos).

IUPS awarded numerous prizes for best abstracts and best poster presentations.



## Acknowledgements to our Past-President



**Professor Susan Wray, Liverpool, UK**

President: 2020-2023

Past-President: 2024-2025

We would like to thank Professor Susan Wray for her outstanding leadership and service as President and Past-President of FEPS.

Under her guidance, FEPS strengthened its voice for physiology across Europe, deepening collaboration between member Societies and fostering the participation of early-career scientists. We are especially grateful for her strong commitment to inclusivity, mentorship, and advocacy for the vital role of physiology in health, education, and innovation.

## Welcome to our new President-Elect



**Professor Jolanda van der Velden**

Chair of the Department of Physiology at the Amsterdam University Medical Centre, NL

In agreement with the statutes of FEPS, a nomination committee chaired by the past –president nominated candidates for the position of President-Elect . Due to her outstanding contributions to Physiology Professor van der Velden was one of the candidates suggested by this committee. At the FEPS general council meeting on September 13th, 2025, in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, the delegates unanimously voted for her to become the next President – Elect (2026-2027) and thereafter FEPS President. The members of the FEPS Executive Board are looking forward to working with her.



## Message from the New President-Elect

Professor Jolanda van der Velden, Amsterdam University, NL



I have a BIG heart for science and ended up studying the pathophysiology of big hearts caused by defects in genes that encode for proteins of the sarcomere. While I wanted to become a medical doctor, due to the tombola to enter medical studies, picking the wrong number, I had to decide for another study, and chose to enter the Biology track at the

Leiden university, which offered the opportunity to choose a medical biology track in the third year. This way, I could combine my passion for biology with medicine, which laid the foundation for my interest in research in pathomechanisms of the human body. After my MSc in Biology, I had the opportunity to start a PhD at the Physiology department in Amsterdam, fell in love with physiology and never left the department. I did take the opportunity to work abroad during my MSc, PhD and post-doctoral studies and spent half a year in London taking my family. This allowed me to have a peek in the 'kitchen' of many other institutes, and while building an international network including life-long friendships, I build my own way of managing my team and after that the department of Physiology making use of the different styles I had seen at the different places I worked at.

During my PhD training, I studied the role of sarcomere protein changes in cardiac disease, and together with my supervisor Ger Stienen, set up a methodology to study functional properties of the sarcomere in isolated human cardiac muscle cells, which I combined with analyses of protein phosphorylation, which turned out to be a highly relevant mechanism underlying cardiac dysfunction. Using this method, we established a central role for altered troponin and titin phosphorylation in diastolic dysfunction of the heart. Being fascinated by the complexity of the cardiac sarcomere, and the discovery of pathogenic sarcomere gene variants in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), formed the basis for my research line on this complex inherited heart disease. Collaborating with clinical geneticists, cardiologists and experts in cardiac imaging allowed me to build a strong research line on HCM. While knowledge of molecular pathways and alterations in protein composition and structure are key to understand mechanisms that cause muscle dysfunction, measuring the disease-specific functional characteristics is essential to truly understand the impact of altered signalling pathways, and effectiveness of therapies. This is why we have always put a lot of efforts in designing methods and tools to define human cardiac physiology in a dish making use of unique human cardiac tissue samples, and more recently, stem cell-

derived heart models. In the Netherlands I lead the consortium on inherited heart diseases to study genetic, metabolic and environmental stressors in cardiomyopathy development. Together with patient representatives, I established a Foundation to share research results with society and engage patients in our scientific work and clinical studies. My current expertise and network of national and international collaborations set the stage for translational research and build sufficient support to develop therapies to prevent disease at an early stage of cardiomyopathy.

But in addition to my love for physiology and making use of the most optimal experimental models for research, I have always been active in ways to train and mentor junior scientists. My professorship at the Netherlands Heart Institute in 2012, allowed me to build a program dedicated to training and mentoring young researchers and clinicians. In 2018 I became chair of the Dutch Cardiovascular Research (DCVA) talent pillar and designed the DCVA Leadership program in which mid-career scientists, clinicians, business developers and patients team up in a 2-year training and networking program. In my opinion, we need to diversify the team of future scientists, not only focusing on diversity in research expertise, but also in networking, business development and communication skills, to bring our fundamental knowledge to society. For 10 years I have been Director of the Cardiovascular Research Institute with the task to unite all cardiovascular research groups at the two Medical Centers in Amsterdam, VUmc and AMC. Together with my co-director Mat Daemen, I established the Amsterdam Cardiovascular Sciences Institute which is now embedded in Amsterdam UMC. Last year I entered a new challenge, and became scientific director at the Netherlands Heart Institute, which allows me to further strengthen collaborations between basic and clinical researchers at national level.

I am currently chairing two departments in Amsterdam University Medical Center, Physiology and Experimental Cardiology, which will be united into one department this year, and will bring together even more experts in physiology, who together with experts in genomics hope to bring solutions for individuals with acquired and inherited skeletal, metabolic and cardiac muscle disorders, and strengthen and innovate our education in cardiovascular genomics and general physiology.

I am truly honoured to be selected as incoming FEPS president and look forward to wonderful interactions with colleague physiologists in Europe and strengthen our community.

## Upcoming Meetings

(for more information click on the picture)



**LXXVI SIF NATIONAL CONGRESS  
XX FEPS CONGRESS  
SIF/FEPS BRESCIA 2026**

**PHYSIOLOGY SHAPING THE FUTURE**

**The Medical School, University of Brescia  
Brescia, September 8-11, 2026**



Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to invite you to the **LXXVI Congress of The Italian Society of Physiology (SIF)** and the **XX Congress of the Federation of European Physiological Societies (FEPS)**. This joint meeting of SIF and FEPS, entitled **FEPS-SIF Brescia 2026**, will be held at the University of Brescia, Faculty of Medicine (Brescia, Italy) **from September 8 to 11, 2026**.

The scientific program will offer exciting plenary lectures. Moreover, thanks to the contributions of all participants, several symposia and oral sessions will provide a comprehensive view of cutting-edge physiological research. The poster sessions will connect the European physiology community, and all researchers are warmly welcome to present their work.

When not in sessions, you can explore Brescia, a UNESCO-listed treasure, where Roman and Venetian history blend with a recent past of industrial production and a multi-ethnic community.

The city is also your gateway to the beautiful Lakes Garda and Iseo.

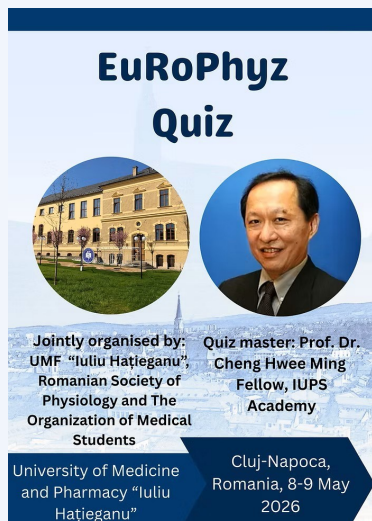
We look forward to welcoming you to Brescia for an inspiring Congress of Physiology.

Sincerely,  
*The Local Organising Committee*



## EuRoPhyz Quiz 2026 - Physiology Quiz Contest. Test Your Knowledge!

(For more information click on the picture)



The Board of the Romanian Society of Physiological Sciences, under the auspices of the "Iuliu Hațieganu" University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca, Romania and the Division of Physiology, are excited to announce the EuRoPhyz Quiz, a challenging event where students can showcase their understanding of the core principles of human physiology! For the students, it is a chance to test their knowledge, to compete with colleagues from other universities, to build friendships and to take home exciting prizes!

## FEPS Traveling Fellowships

- ◆ In 2022 FEPS has introduced the FEPS Travelling Fellowship (FTF) with up to 2 awards each year (€ 1,500 each). The awards can be used flexibly in travelling to and staying in another European country to further an applicant's career in Physiology. The country should be an in good-standing member of FEPS.
- ◆ This fellowship could be to support and develop research or exceptionally teaching. These awards are targeted at those who are postdoctoral workers, or in their first tenured position.
- ◆ Given the need to focus our limited funds and being aware of regional differences in the capacity of FEPS national society members, we will prioritize applications from those in regions where local funds are particularly restricted.
- ◆ These awards are not open to undergraduate or postgraduate students or senior scientists. These awards are not intended to cover meeting attendance – FEPS has a separate funding scheme for attendance at its meetings, including Europhysiology.
- ◆ Applicants will need to demonstrate how they will benefit from the FTF. They must have a host, clearly developed plans, aims and a timetable for their visit. The availability of any other supporting funds or benefits in kind (e.g. free accommodation), should be mentioned in the application. Successful candidates should also provide a short report on their FTF, suitable for the FEPS webpage and newsletter after their visit.
- ◆ For details and [application forms](#) see the [FEPS website](#).