

EBSA News—Letter from Europe

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So what's been happening in and around biosafety in Europe? The European Biosafety Association (EBSA) is at the heart of biosafety throughout the diverse continent of Europe—not just in the European Union (EU). Back in March 2008 we had a fantastic conference in the lovely Italian city of Florence, with high attendance and an interesting programme that kept attendees away from the sights and shopping. The conference dinner made all of us feel like royalty in such grand surroundings.

Recent projects initiated by the European commission have made it possible, with key partners including the American Biological Safety Association (ABSA), to develop the Biorisk Management Standard. ABSA mem-

bers will know how to access it and the ongoing projects to develop auditing tools and certification. In addition, EBSA has been participating in the Sandia Wikipedia assessment workshop. Because we realized there was a lack of recognition and description of the responsibilities of biosafety officers/advisors across the European countries, this is now directed toward a CEN Workshop agreement, similar to the one for the Biorisk Management Standard. This effort has been aided by financial support from the Dutch, Swiss, and Canadian governments and others.

ESBA also works to inform and influence the rule makers in Europe to put in place proportional risk-, and evidence-based legislation. Although a common legal framework for biological risk is set out in the biological agents directive, it seems multiple different ways to interpret it exist. A large project sponsored by the EU Sixth Framework on Biosafety-Europe has recently reported its findings. These clarified that much additional work is required to raise and harmonise biosafety risk management in Europe.

The biosafety community in Europe is lively with too many conferences and symposia to mention all equally here. Bookmark our web site www.ebsaweb.eu and see if there is something there for you.

Fund Donations

ABSA thanks the many of you who have generously contributed to the Richard C. Knudsen Memorial Fund. Richard Knudsen was a President of ABSA and Editor of *Applied Biosafety*. The proceeds from this fund are used annually to recognize an author who's article in *Applied Biosafety* contributes to the scientific body of knowledge in biosafety. Those wishing to make donations to this fund should make their checks payable to the American Biological Safety Association. Please add a notation to the memo line that the check is to be used for the Richard C. Knudsen Memorial Fund. Checks should be mailed to ABSA, 1200 Allanson Road, Mundelein, Illinois 60060-3808.