

# FEMS ANNUAL REPORT 2014

## BUILDING COMMUNITIES

CHARITY NUMBER: 1072117



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2014 was a big year for FEMS. It was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our first general meeting – where we formally elected our first Executive Committee – and it marked the start of profound organizational change. After four decades of helping thousands of scientists to meet, learn, and exchange ideas, expertise and knowledge we are now looking at how we can help our community to become more relevant across both academia and the wider society.

Following an earlier business review, 2014 saw us develop and publish our new strategic framework, and appoint Catherine Cotton as our first Managing Director. The first major change on her arrival was to shift the bulk of administration around our journals to our new publishing partner, Oxford University Press (OUP), freeing us up to take on a wider range of activities. At the same time we moved our Business Office to a more open office in the Delftechpark, not far from the Technical University of Delft (TU Delft), where we had been located for the previous 15 years.

Over the years FEMS has attracted 52 society memberships that cover 36 countries in Europe, and we are still continuing to grow. In 2014 we welcomed two new Member Societies: the **Austrian Association of Molecular Life Sciences and Biotechnology**, and the **All-Russian Public Organization National Academy of Mycology**. Together these societies bring around 1000 new members into the FEMS community. Meanwhile the total number of Affiliates, who are individuals who sign up for news and information about participation opportunities at no cost, increased by 4% during 2014, with the total number standing at 4,557 by the end of the year.

This was a good year for our journals. Our leading title, FEMS Microbiology Reviews, maintained its position at number 4 in the Thomson-Reuters 2013 rankings (released in July 2014). We also took on a new Editor-in-Chief, Rich Boden, for our longest-running journal, FEMS Microbiology Letters, in time for him to take the reins in the New Year. And we took the opportunity to look back over our first 40 years in four specially-commissioned anniversary issues that celebrated the diversity of both our authors and their work.

It is predominantly the revenues from our journals that allow us to continue to invest in science – as we have done since the start - with grants remaining a major component of our charitable activities. In 2014 we contributed just over € 250,000 towards the training of more than 260 early career researchers. This represents 34 small research grants, more than 230 travel grants for attending meetings, and another 19 meeting grants for organizing a range of events, including regional congresses and workshops. These latter allowed 195 early career researchers and 68 invited speakers to attend meetings across 11 different European countries, from Croatia and Turkey, to the UK and France. And finally, we also developed our new grants application system, which allows applicants to apply for research and meetings attendance grants directly online.

Back in 2000, we initiated an awards program to recognize academic achievement and outstanding service to microbiology, and 2014 saw our most recent award, the Mäkelä-Cassell Award go to **Francesca Turrone** of the **Italian Society for General Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology** for her presentation on bifidobacterial microbe-host “crosstalk”.

The FEMS / ESCMID (European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases) Joint Research Fellow was **Martina Strittmatter** (France), of the British Phycological Society; and the ESCMID / FEMS Joint Research Fellows were **Cynthia Mira Sharma** (Germany), and **Maria Isabel Veiga** (Portugal). During the course of 2014, we organized three Executive Committee meetings in Delft, Aberdeen and Belgrade, and our Annual Meeting of the Council was held in Belgrade, courtesy of our Member Society, the Serbian Society for Microbiology. On behalf of the European microbiology community, I would like to thank all of those who were involved in FEMS activities during 2014 for their interest and commitment.



Dr Jean-Claude Piffaretti  
President



# MESSAGE FROM THE MD



There is much talk today about research impact and the need to develop strong collaboration between academics, politicians, businesses, communicators and the wider public, across all sectors and all regions. At the same time it is vital that we ensure the continued excellence in the scientific research and education that underpin the success of such collaborative efforts. It is this dual purpose of contributing to both research excellence, and its application in wider society, that makes working with today's professional and scholarly associations so exciting.

At FEMS in particular, with our federating role, we are in a great position to work with multiple partners across academia and other sectors. Our new strategic framework highlights the importance not just of research but also of its roles in education, policy, business and public engagement. It also recognizes the fundamentally globalized nature of scientific endeavour, marking the start of an exciting new phase in our 40-year history of helping European scientists meet, collaborate and exchange ideas.

It has been a pleasure, throughout 2014, to work with the FEMS community on preparing for this new stage in our development, and I look forward, very much, to seeing further benefits of our collective work over the coming years.

C. M. Cotton.

Catherine Cotton  
Managing Director

# INTRODUCTION

Established in 1974 with the aim of facilitating interaction and collaboration between microbiologists across Europe, FEMS' first charitable activities were focused primarily on helping scientists across Europe to share their knowledge, experience and skills. Our mission started with support from the UK's Society for General Microbiology, with the participation of nine Member Societies all keen to engage in better trans-European interaction.

With this goal, our founding members started to organize specialist symposia – the first being held in 1976 – and they worked hard to provide grants for attendees from different parts of Europe. Soon afterwards, we launched the first of our five journals to promote rapid research communications between microbiologists internationally, and, following the success of FEMS Microbiology Letters, we were able to launch our now extensive grants programme in 1982. Since then we have supported well over 300 conferences, and helped thousands of early career scientists to travel to meetings, attend laboratory courses and work with experts in the field.

In light of our early successes, in 2000, we formed the strategic advisory group, Terra Nova, comprising representatives from both our Member Societies and FEMS Executive Committee, to investigate our future potential. This resulted in the launch of the now biennial FEMS Congress along with other projects aimed at promoting excellence and broadening participation in microbiology – with a particular emphasis on assisting researchers in Eastern Europe.

We now publish five highly respected journals and fund approximately € 300,000 every year in grants and awards.

Our Congress has become a very popular event that attracts up to 2,500 international participants, and features some of the world's leading names in microbiology. Our grants, awards, reduced congress fees and other benefits are available to the members of our Member Societies, for a membership fee of just €1.40 per head.

Following on from the Terra Nova group's solid foundations, 2014 saw us update our strategic framework, thus expanding our organizational mission to better address the needs of modern microbiology professionals charged with finding solutions to the big social and economic issues facing society, policy makers and business. This new strategic approach has already called for changes in the structure and function of our Business Office, and will lead to similar changes in the way that the FEMS leadership and membership work to achieve these long-term goals. These include building a strong community of microbiologists and facilitating their contribution to critical issues, such as reducing the spread of disease through better public awareness, increasing the chances of finding solutions by influencing where funding is targeted, and improving the career paths and achievements of future microbiologists.



<sup>1</sup> At our inception our Member Societies were expected to pay an annual subscription based on a rate of 1.8 Swiss Francs per member – equivalent to around 1.7 Euro in 2014. (EA Dawes 1992).

# GOVERNANCE

FEMS is a UK Registered Charity and Not-for-Profit Company<sup>1</sup>. To date it has been governed by an Executive Committee elected by the FEMS Council. Our Council in turn consists of elected representatives from each of our Member Societies and Affiliated Organizations. Both can elect and send a representative to our general meetings, but differ in that the Member Societies have voting rights whereas Affiliated Organizations do not.

Our Registered Office is in the UK, and as of January 2014 our Business Office in the Netherlands has been managed by the FEMS chief executive, the Managing Director. In 2014 the Executive Committee consisted of six Directors:



Dr Jean-Claude  
Piffaretti  
PRESIDENT  
(SWITZERLAND)



Dr Stefano Donadio  
SECRETARY-GENERAL  
(ITALY)



Dr Jim Prosser  
PUBLICATIONS MANAGER  
(UK)



Dr Bauke Oudega  
VICE-PRESIDENT  
(THE NETHERLANDS)



Dr Roland Koerner  
TREASURER  
(UK)



Dr Jaroslav Spizek  
GRANTS SECRETARY  
(CZECH REPUBLIC)

The Directors are also Executive Members and can vote at all general meetings. There are also two co-opted Executive Members. The Managing Director, as of January 2014, is Catherine Cotton (NL).



Dr Per-Eric Lindgren  
MEMBER-AT-LARGE  
(MEETINGS) (SWEDEN)



Dr Joanna Verran  
MEMBER-AT-LARGE  
(EDUCATION) (UK)



Dr Catherine Cotton  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
(THE NETHERLANDS)

# Succession

In September 2014 Stefano Donadio was voted, for a second term (2015-2018), as Secretary General, and Jozef Anné (Belgium) was voted as the new Grants Secretary (2015-2018). From September 2014 the Vice President, Bauke Oudega, took on the role of Grants Secretary, as Jaroslav Spizek stood down on health grounds. We would like to thank Jaroslav for his commitment to FEMS and for his hard work, first as a Delegate Representative on the Grants Board, and later as its Secretary and Chair. Along with Jozef we also saw the election of our new Treasurer-in-waiting (2015–2018), Colin Harwood.



Dr Jozef Anné  
GRANTS SECRETARY-IN-  
WAITING (BELGIUM)



Dr Colin Harwood  
TREASURER-IN-WAITING  
(UK)

<sup>1</sup> Limited by Guarantee and Not Having a Share Capital



# Meetings

In 2014, the Executive Committee met three times in January (Delft, NL), April (Aberdeen, UK) and September (Belgrade, Serbia) to develop our strategic direction and manage our governance. Following consultation with the Council, and approval at the 2014 Council Meeting, our 2015-19 Strategic Framework was published in November.

The 2014 Council Meetings were attended by 22 Member Society representatives and hosted by the Serbian Society for Microbiology (SSM) in Belgrade. We are very grateful to the SSM for organizing such a wonderful event, and would like to thank the organizers Branka Vasiljevic and Dragojlo Obradovic for their great hospitality. Our Executive Committee has also been supported by a number of Member Society representatives who have served on our Grants, Awards, Meetings and Publications boards. In 2014 these were:



Dr Ricardo Guerrero  
BOARDS PUBLICATIONS  
(SPAIN)



Dr Helge Holo  
GRANTS  
(NORWAY)



Dr Vaso Taleski  
GRANTS  
(MACEDONIA)



Dr Alexander Netrusov  
AWARDS (RUSSIA)



Dr Beate Averhoff  
AWARDS  
(GERMANY)



Dr Gianfranco Donelli  
MEETINGS (ITALY)

# MEMBERSHIP

## A diverse community

Most scholarly organizations have members who are people. People who work as researchers, teachers, communicators, policy makers or practitioners in a particular field. Our members are different. Rather than being individuals who pay a membership fee to belong to a society, our members are the scholarly societies and professional associations to which such individuals belong. This means that we work not only with individual microbiologists but also with the organizations that represent them. Our shared goals are to promote research excellence across microbiological disciplines and to maximize the beneficial impact of our science on society as a whole.

With nine founding societies growing quickly to 17 across 15 countries in 1974, 2014 saw us grow to 52 Member Societies representing 36 countries from the European region – plus a further three that are international bodies in themselves. Our members, like the countries they belong to, are extremely diverse, ranging from our smallest society with around 50 members to our largest with more than 4,000. In terms of discipline they include, of course, national microbiology societies but also applied and medical societies, as well as some from related disciplines.

Since 1974 we have grown at an average of one Member Society per year, our rate of growth actually increasing

since 1992. In 2014 we welcomed two new members: The **Austrian Association of Molecular Life Sciences and Biotechnology**, and the **All- Russian Public Organization “National Academy of Mycology”**, who together bring almost 1,000 new members into the FEMS network.

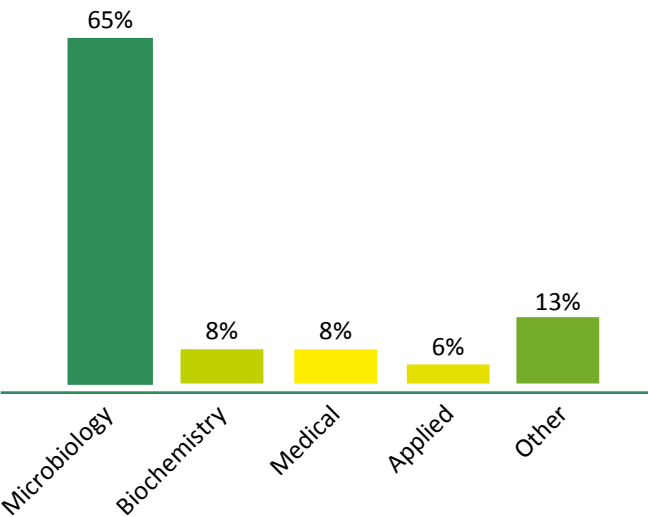
Like FEMS, many of our Member Societies provide grants, or organize a regular congress, and several publish scholarly journals. All share our goal of promoting interactions and knowledge exchange across the microbiology community. Our goal for the future is to work more closely with our members and other partners to deliver valuable benefits to both the community of microbiologists and the wider public.

## AFFILIATES

Our Affiliates are individuals who join FEMS free of charge to stay connected and involved with our activities, grants and events. Many are already members of one of our Member Societies – in which case they will also be eligible for our member benefits – but equally many are not. They range from students and professors to hospital staff and commercial scientists active in all fields of microbiology and other relevant disciplines: genetics, agriculture and atomic energy to name just a few. In 2014 we had 4,557 Affiliates, up from 4,386 in 2013. During the course of the year we sent out 12 editions of our FEMS Affiliates newsletter and one ‘FEMS Focus’ on the subject of Open Access publishing.

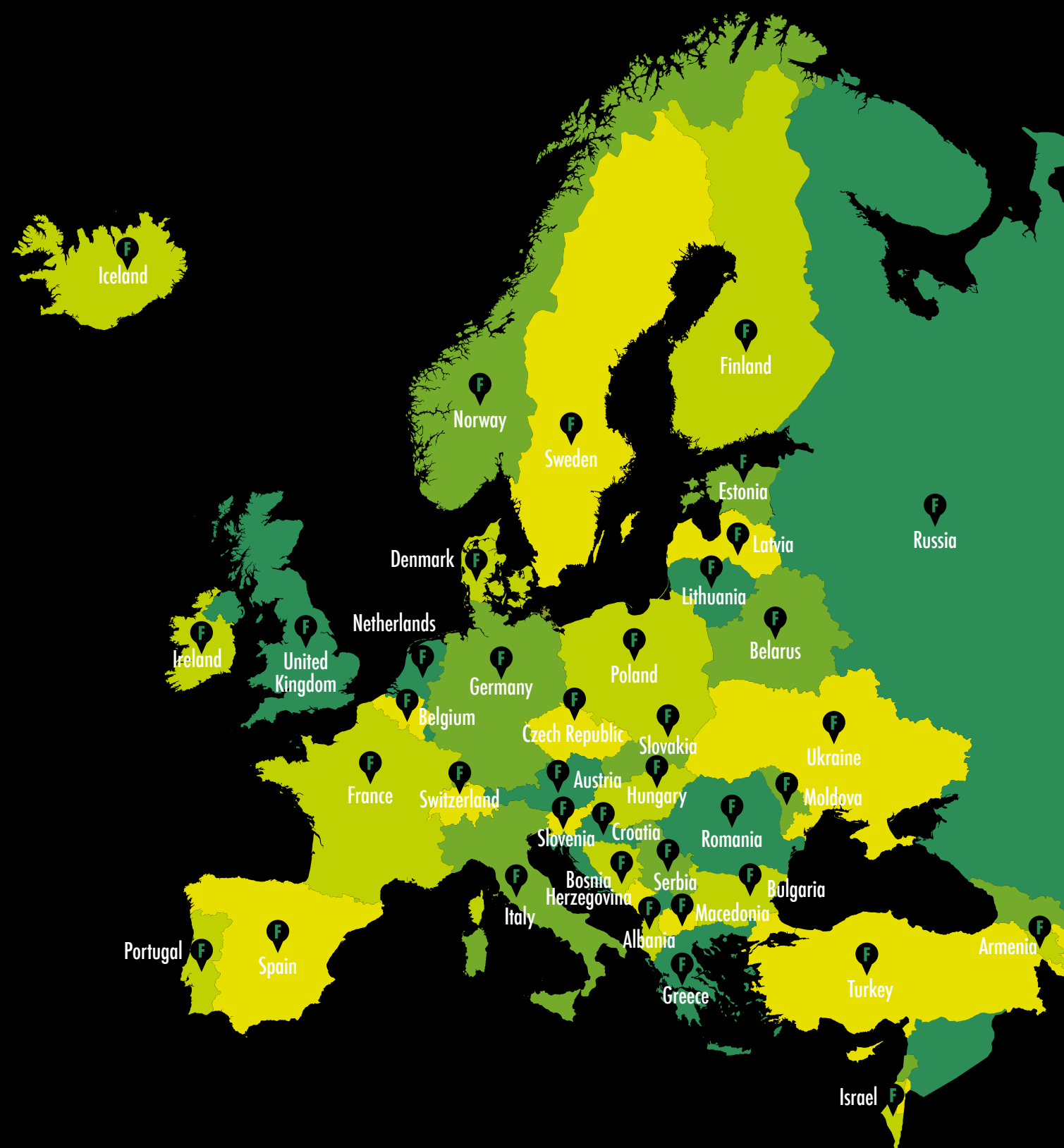
## DISCIPLINES REPRESENTED IN FEMS

Percentage of member societies



Approximately a third of those within our Member Societies come from disciplines beyond pure microbiology.

Our membership ranges from European Member and Candidate States to close neighbours such as Israel, Turkey, Armenia and Russia.



Our Irish member is a sub-branch of the Microbiology Society (UK).

## Meet one of our members: The Serbian Society for Microbiology

The Serbian Society for Microbiology (SSM) is an independent association whose key goals are to increase the opportunities for Serbian microbiologists and promote the country's scientific achievements. It has around 250 members and organizes congresses, meetings and seminars to provide important networking opportunities at national, regional and international levels.

### THE SERBIAN CONTEXT

Currently an official Candidate State to the EU, Serbia regained its independence in 2006 following the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The impact of the region's history has been as significant for its scientists as it has for its population. Branka Vasiljevic, the Society's representative on the FEMS Council, explains that there are several factors involved, and that after more than two decades with only limited positions in academic institutions or in industry, few start-ups and little funding for essential research materials, many of the country's best students look for opportunities elsewhere. Only some of them, Branka notes, come back.

Promoting science to a wider audience is one of SSM's key goals and includes activities, such as getting involved

in initiatives like Researchers' Night, and Serbia's 2014 Science Festival. But Branka and her colleagues in the SSM are equally keen to provide networking opportunities for professional microbiologists. They organize several events, some of which are free to PhD students, where students and established scientists can meet to discuss latest news in the field and develop productive collaborations that generate funding or pass on expertise. They also have members involved in critical initiatives such as the Accreditation Body of Serbia at the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Being a member of FEMS makes a key contribution to the SSM's goals, our grants funding exchanges between different countries as well as participation at conferences and workshops. This year we were lucky enough to hear in person about how our grants have helped at our 2014 Annual Meeting of the Council, which the SSM very kindly hosted in Belgrade. There they gave us the opportunity to meet some former FEMS Fellows, one of whom was Milica Petrusic. A FEMS Research Fellow in 2013, Milica used the opportunity to get specialist training in a laboratory at Sweden's University of Lund that both introduced her to new research and ideas, and also helped her to complete her doctoral thesis.



*Serbia's Science Festival brings science closer to a non-scientific audience, provoking interest in scientific work and its impacts in everyday life*



*Former FEMS Research Fellows, left to right: Nedjeljko Karabasil, Natasa Golic, Milica Petrusic, Ivica Tamas, Dragan Radnovic and Branka Vukovic-Gacic*



# ACTIVITIES

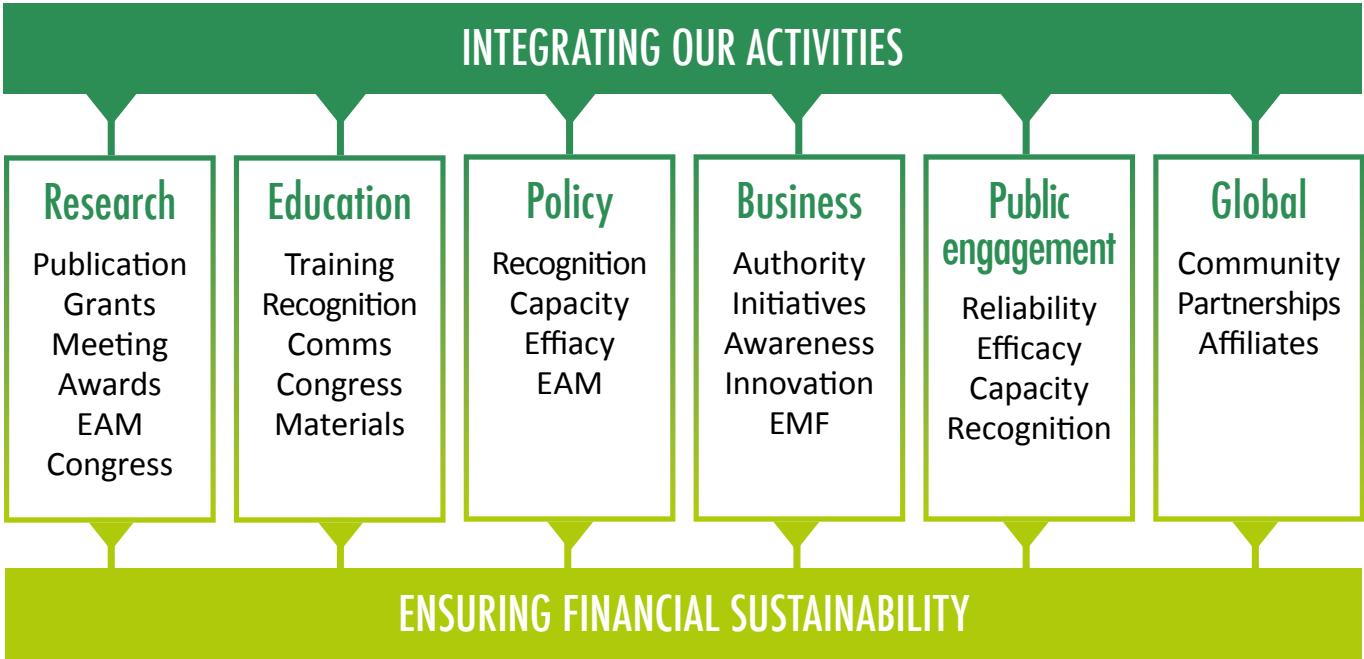
## A FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, 2015-2019

In April 2000, the Terra Nova working group – comprising several representatives of Member Societies and FEMS Trustees – presented a strategy report to our Executive Committee outlining potential routes both to enhance member services and to diversify and increase income. Since then we have made good progress, starting our widely acclaimed biennial Congress of European Microbiologists, and expanding our awards programme to include the FEMS-Jensen and FEMS-Special Merit Awards.

But over the last 15 years, the political and academic landscapes of Europe have been changing rapidly, and today the nature and needs of our different Member Societies often differ dramatically. At the same time, massive growth in journal titles and conferences, the advent of online and Open Access publishing, fundamental changes in funding, and the advent of big data, social media and new technologies, have left many, if not all, scholarly societies examining their role in modern science. Clearly time to take stock, the FEMS leadership took on the task of developing – and consulting our membership on – a new 5-year strategic framework, which we finalized and published towards the end of 2014. The resulting strategy can be divided into six strategic priorities aimed at promoting the quality of microbiology research and education, and strengthening its influence on relevant policy and economics, with the overall goal of significantly improving the impact and understanding of microbiology in society.

## RESEARCH

Our longest-established and most widely recognized work has focused on supporting microbiology research through the publication of our five international journals, the organization of our biennial Congress, and our extensive programme of conference and research grants. Our aim is to build on this successful foundation to develop further our support of microbiology research.



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Our goal in education is to contribute to the next generation of microbiologists by facilitating the training of educators, driving the improvement of educational materials and developing ways of recognising excellence in teaching.

## POLICY

As a Europe-wide Federation uniting 33 national microbiology societies and another 19 organizations focused on specialized sub-disciplines, we have the potential to provide an effective platform for our members to influence relevant policy both at the European level and in wider international processes. This is a programme that will require specific efforts to build recognition and deploy our collective capacity to provide effective support to key decision-makers.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

The global microbiology industry is worth hundreds of billions of dollars each year, yet the links between microbiology research and its commercial and social applications remain often rather limited. Our goals within the new framework are to establish our position as a recognized authority, facilitate collaboration between complementary institutions, promote mutual awareness between sectors, and promote innovation and entrepreneurship among microbiology students, scientists and professionals.



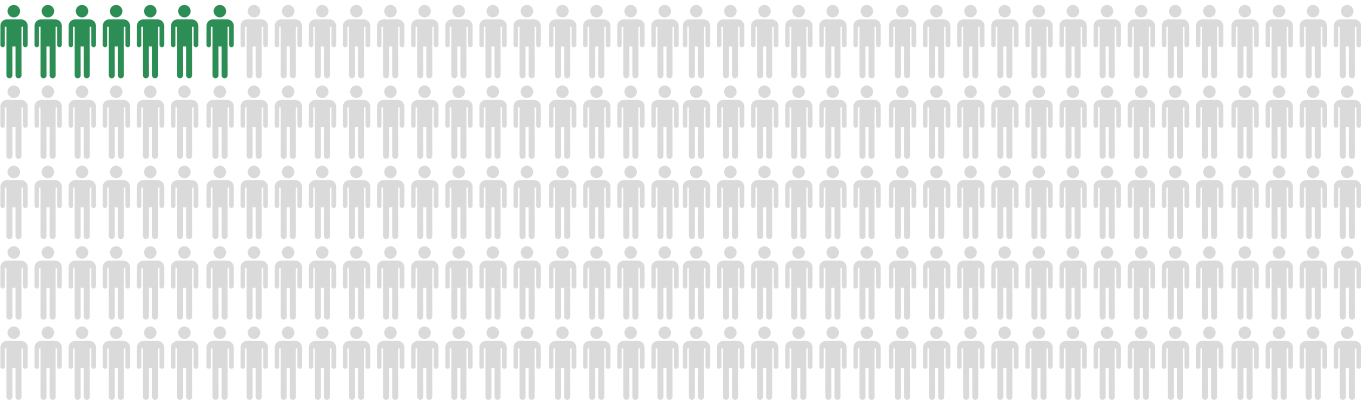
An Education meeting in Delft that would result in organising a one-day education session at the FEMS congress in 2015

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

An educated public that recognizes the importance of microbiology to life, both today and in the future, is fundamental to raising the visibility and influence of the global microbiology community. Our goals here are to establish effective means both to promote and provide access to our members’ expertise, and to support effective global communications. Sharing information from national campaign – such as shown below – with the global microbiology community is one of the means to support these communications.

# DEATHS ATTRIBUTABLE TO AMR EVERY YEAR

Compared to other major causes of death. One person represents 100 thousand people.



AMR now: 700,000 (low estimate). AMR in 2050: 10 million



Cancer: 8.2 million



Diabetes:  
1.5 million



Diarrhoeal  
disease:  
1.4 million



Road traffic  
accidents:  
1.2 million



Measles:  
130,000



Cholera:  
100,000 –  
120,000



Tetanus:  
60,000

# INTERNATIONALIZATION

Microorganisms don’t recognize international boundaries, and many of the issues facing society and science are increasing global ones. Our goal is to build partnerships and further develop our Membership and Affiliates programmes to broaden the reach of our activities, and collaborate with international experts.

# PUBLICATIONS

## TRANSITION TO OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Publication activity during 2014 was dominated by the transition to our new publisher, Oxford University Press (OUP). OUP is a Department within the University of Oxford and prides itself on targeting journal quality, rather than quantity. As an indicator of this, OUP publishes a greater proportion of high-ranking journals (in terms of Thomson Reuters Impact Factor) than any of the other major publishers, with 55% of their titles in the top 25% of their subject category. OUP, like FEMS, uses revenues from publishing to invest back into science, and we are delighted to see our journals as OUP’s flagships in microbiology.



OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Small enough to provide a personal, bespoke service to its publishing partners, OUP has established a dedicated team to work on the FEMS journals, together with the journal development staff in our Business Office. Together they ensure that our publications are aligned with, and contribute to, our broader activities that the journals are able to support.

One of the most visible changes, with the help of OUP, has been the redesign of our journal branding, to help increase recognition, particularly online, given that we no longer produce printed issues. The new look brings instant recognition to our user-friendly portal that lets readers search through all our content and browse our special collections. This portal was developed by our partners OUP and is at [www.femsjournals.com](http://www.femsjournals.com).



Our new journal covers keep their old colours while creating a more visible online- presence



# JOURNAL HIGHLIGHTS

Since we published the first article in *FEMS Microbiology Letters* in 1977, FEMS has built up its publishing portfolio to span all fields of microbiology at all stages in the scientific process. *FEMS Microbiology Letters* and *FEMS Microbiology Reviews* – the fourth-ranking journal in the field – are broad based, whereas *FEMS Microbiology Ecology*, *FEMS Yeast Research* and *Pathogens and Disease* focus on their specific fields.

As well as disseminating high quality science across the globe, our journals provide the bulk of the revenues that support our charitable activities. As such our relationship with our journals, and the editorial boards who support the journals, are at the heart of all of our activities.

# MEET OUR EDITORS



Dr Patrik Bavoil  
PATHOGENS AND  
DISEASE



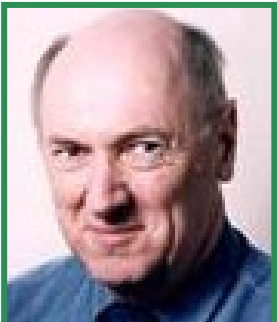
Dr Jens Nielsen  
FEMS YEAST RESEARCH



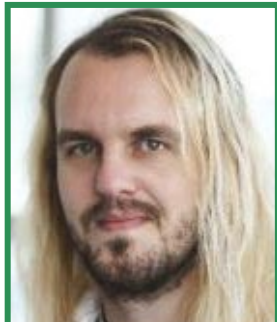
Dr Max Häggblom  
FEMS MICROBIOLOGY  
ECOLOGY



Dr Alain Filloux  
FEMS MICROBIOLOGY  
REVIEWS



Dr Jeff Cole  
FEMS MICROBIOLOGY  
LETTERS



Dr Rich Boden  
FEMS MICROBIOLOGY  
LETTERS (SUCCESSOR)

*FEMS Microbiology Letters* said goodbye to long-standing Editor-in-Chief, Jeff Cole, who successfully led the journal for 12 years, and welcomed Rich Boden who prepared to take on the role from January 2015. In 2014 around 140 Handling Editors and 2,400 Reviewers worked with us to provide rapid high quality reviews and get authors' work to readers quickly.

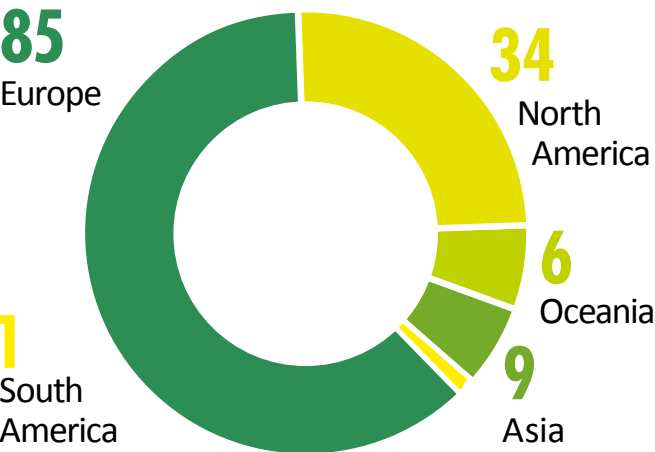
# GLOBAL REACH

While FEMS is based in Europe our reach is global, with lead authors from 76 countries publishing in our journals in 2014. This international presence is helped by our growing number of international editors, with newly appointed editors in China, India, Taiwan and the USA, along with reviewers who are bringing their expertise from around the world.

## 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

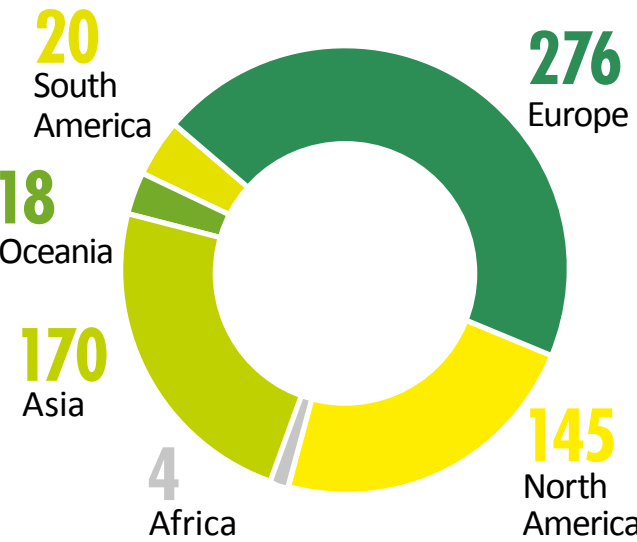
- Increased Impact Factors for *FEMS Microbiology Ecology* and *FEMS Microbiology Reviews*
- *FEMS Microbiology Reviews* solidifies its 4th-ranking position in microbiology in Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports
- Submissions increased 2.5 percent compared to 2013
- Full text downloads increased from 2.1 million in 2013 to around 2.5 million in 2014
- Increased internationalization of readership
- Celebration of 40 years of FEMS with four special issues highlighting the achievements of just some of our authors

## EDITORS



Number of FEMS Handling Editors per continent of origin (2014) (Source: Scholar One)

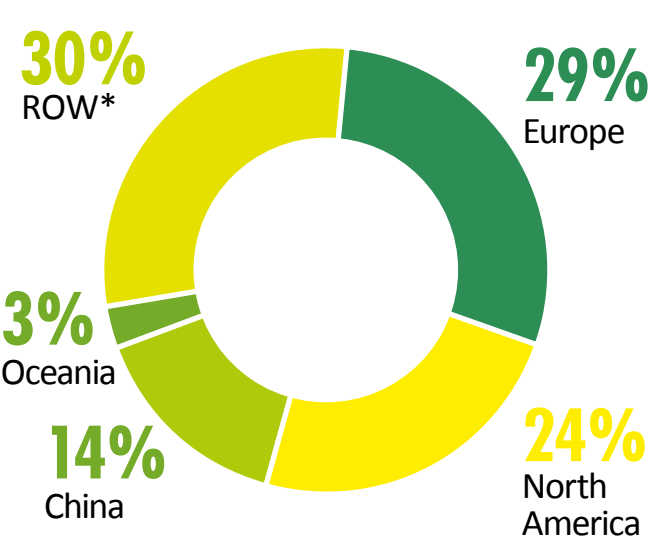
## LEAD AUTHORS



Number of accepted papers by lead authors publishing with FEMS per continent of origin (2014) (Source: Scholar One)

\*ROW: Rest of world

## READERS (full text downloads)



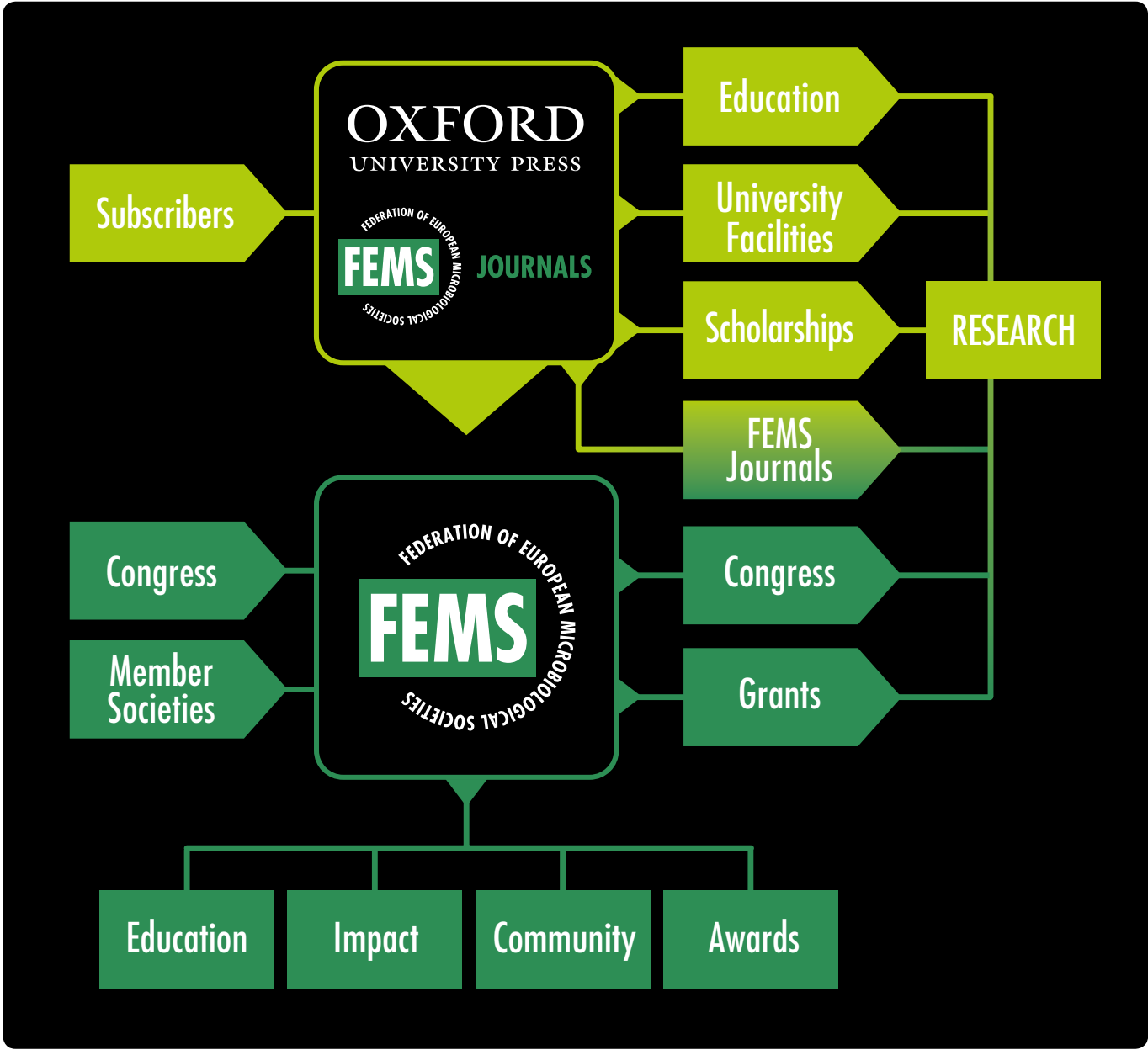
Percentage of readers of the FEMS journals-full text downloads per region (2014) (Wiley annual report)



# GRANTS AND AWARDS

The FEMS founding remit was to promote interaction between researchers across Europe. With this in mind, our initial focus was on supporting the funding of meetings, but towards the end of our first decade, in 1982, we expanded our activities from mostly organising meetings, to also providing grants and training opportunities. The goal was to help postgraduate students and postdoctoral scientists (researchers in the earlier stages of their careers) to attend meetings and develop essential new skills. By the end of the 1980s our remit expanded again and we started to help research students and postdocs from across Europe to attend specialist summer schools, workshops and meetings, and to sponsor a small number of fellowships for researchers showing particular promise.

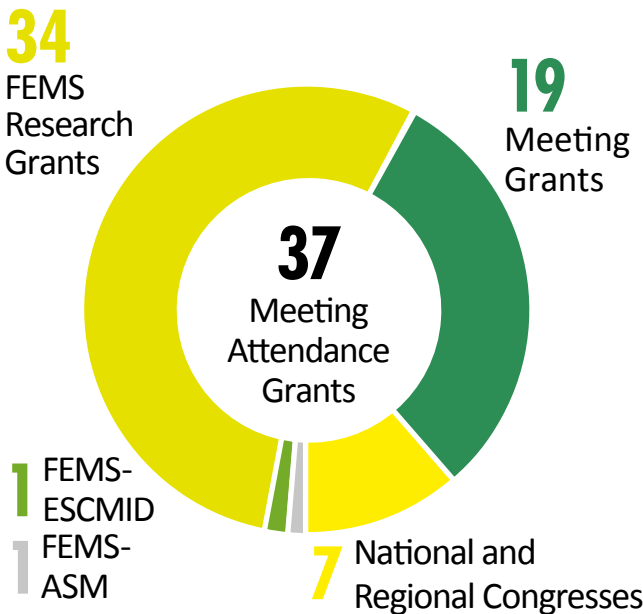
Today, we're still investing in science with grants remaining a major component of our charitable activities. In 2014 we contributed €251,000 to the training of more than 260 early career researchers. This represented 258 grants for attending meetings and to organize them, the latter funding 195 early career researchers and 68 invited speakers to take part in 19 FEMS-sponsored meetings across 11 different European countries, from Croatia and Turkey to the UK and France.



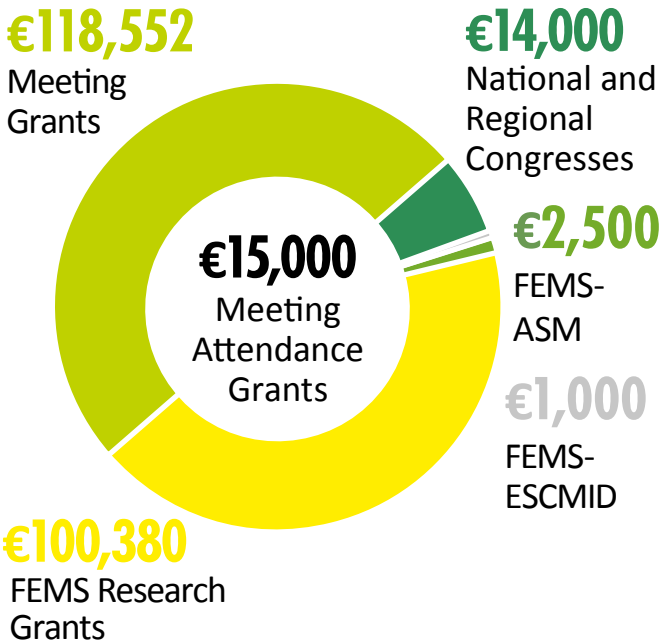
From 2000, we also initiated our awards program to recognize academic achievement and outstanding service to microbiology. In 2014 our most recent award, the Mäkelä-Cassell Award, went to **Francesca Turroni** (Italy) of the Italian Society for General Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology. This award, like many of our grants, is aimed at providing an exchange opportunity for early career researchers, and is awarded jointly with the American Society of Microbiology. We have also agreed on a joint initiative with the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) to foster outstanding research in microbiology by young Europeans. Every year each participating organization selects an outstanding grantee to receive an additional award from their reciprocal partner.

In 2014 the FEMS/ESCMID Research Joint Fellow was **Martina Strittmatter**, (France), of the British Phycological Society, and the ESCMID/FEMS Research Joint Fellows were **Cynthia Mira Sharma** (Germany) and **Maria Isabel Veiga** (Portugal).

## NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED 2014



## TOTAL VALUE OF GRANTS AWARDED 2014



### FEMS GRANTS MOVE ONLINE

FEMS grants move online – On May 19 2014, Grants Online, our new grants

Replacing the previous system of e-mails and physical documents, this new system has seen some great improvements for applicants, reviewers and for grants administration. Direct data entry makes hard copies redundant, improves accuracy and reduces costs on postage and storage.

The new system also improves transparency and speed by:

- Facilitating tracking of the whole process - by the applicant, the reviewers and the grants administrator
- Allowing easy access for all parties to the online files
- Allowing applicants to apply directly to FEMS

*In 2014 we awarded 362 grants totalling for more than quarter of a million Euros to meetings and congress organizers, meeting attendees and early career researchers.*



# Profile of a FEMS Grantee:

## BENJAMIN STEGMANN: “I FOUND THE SOLUTIONS I NEEDED”

Benjamin Stegmann studied biology at the University of Ulm, Germany. Inspired by his professors Elisabeth Kalko, from the University’s Institute for Experimental Ecology, and Peter Dürre, from its Institute for Microbiology and Biotechnology, Benjamin’s interest in the ecology of bacteria took him to Panama. There he caught bats and tested them for their oral microbiota revealing that these flying mammals show a decreased incidence of dental decay although their diet consists mainly of sugar. His experiences in the field of microbiology encouraged him to continue his investigations in microbiology through a PhD.



Now, four years into his doctoral project, Benjamin’s current goal is to develop renewable resources – including energy – by exploiting the natural functions of bacteria.

“We have here different working groups,” he explains. “One is working with biogas, another is fermenting carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide to succinate, acetate, or to other products we can use again. Basically we use waste gas and produce other chemicals which you can use for the industry.”

During the course of his research, Benjamin had a problem with a bacteriophage called CMX that he wanted to use as a tool to for genetic modification, and was looking for

information to help him sort it out. Looking around he found someone with the expertise he needed at the Institute of Food Research in Norwich, where Dr Melinda Mayer is working with bacteriophages of pathogenic Clostridia. Benjamin started to look for funding to help him visit Mayer’s lab and on the recommendation of a friend he applied for, and was awarded, a FEMS Research Grant that allowed him to visit Mayer and develop specialist methods for handling and analysing both CMX and another bacteriophage, HMT. “I learned new methods which I could apply, and so they brought me much further in my own work.”

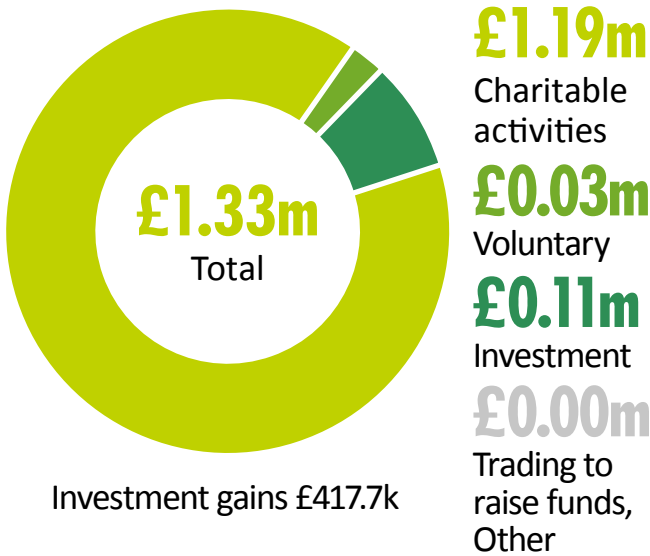
Above  
Benjamin Stegmann, FEMS Research Grantee  
(2014, Induction and characterization of the clostridial bacteriophage CMX for developing a new set of molecular tools)

# Financial period

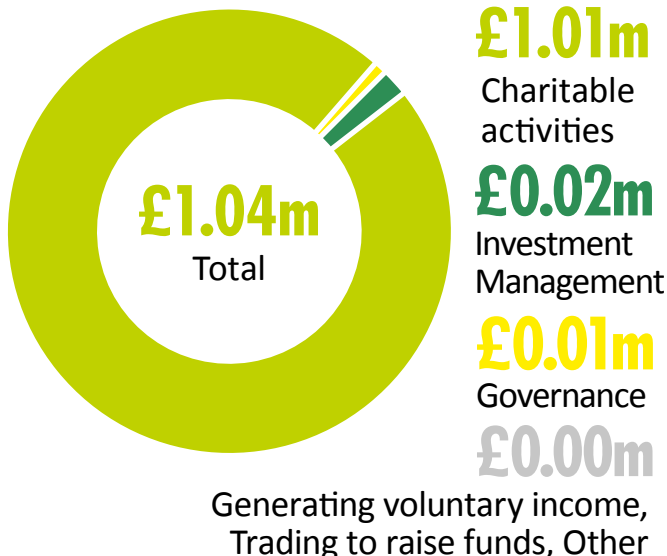
This Annual Return has been completed for the following dates:

- Financial period start - 01 January 2014
- Financial period end - 31 December 2014
- Next financial period end: 31 December 2015

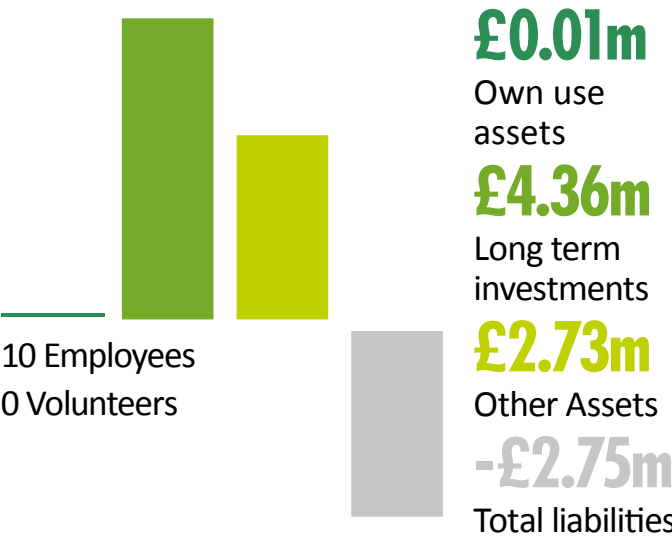
## INCOME £1,332,300



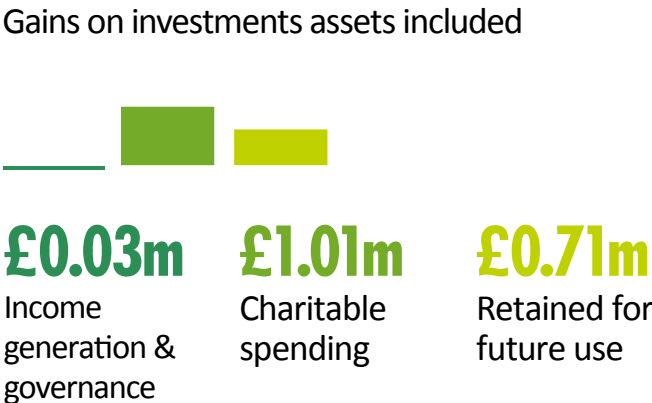
## SPENDING £1,042,930



## ASSETS, LIABILITIES & PEOPLE



## CHARITABLE SPENDING



A full report has been registered with the UK Charity Commission and can be found via this webpage:  
<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityWithPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1072117&SubsidiaryNumber=0>



# THE FEMS NETWORK

FEMS is a network of around 30,000 microbiologists across Europe, plus more than 4,500 Affiliates from around the world. Working closely with our Executive Committee and Member Society representatives, as well as our Editors-in-Chief and their editorial boards, are eight professional staff, ranging from on-call to full-time, who work at our Business Office in Delft. Additional colleagues include our accountant and consultants in specialist areas such as employment law, tax requirements and human resources. In addition to these are our many colleagues in publishing, which in 2014 included both existing colleagues at Wiley-Blackwell and new ones at OUP.

2014 saw an initial round of changes at our Business Office. These arose from our 2014 shift to a new publisher, and start of the handover of operations from the Executive Committee to the professional staff. These changes went hand in hand with a move from the campus of the TU Delft to the Delftechpark, a business park for innovative, knowledge-intensive companies just across the road from the University. The new, streamlined, open plan office has a dedicated meeting room providing a practical hub for our international operations. At the same time our continued proximity to the University allows us to maintain and build our relationships there.



Our new Business Office is in the Delftechpark, close to the TU Delft.



We received our first international guests at the new Business Office in July for an initial meeting on education led by our Member-at-Large for Education, Jo Verran.



Apart of our 40th anniversary celebrations, we hosted our first local networking event – including journal Editors past and present, local microbiologists, and our partners, OUP, who joined us courtesy of video technology. Guests included Lex Scheffers, Founder Chief Editor FEMS Yeast Research, and Alenka Prinic of TU Delft

## Who are we?

Our international team in Delft consists of:



Dr Catherine Cotton  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
(THE NETHERLANDS)



Lotte Nielsen  
MEMBERSHIP OFFICER  
(DENMARK)



Gillian van Beest  
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR  
(UK)



Dr Erwin Ripmeester  
JOURNAL DEVELOPMENT  
EDITOR (NETHERLANDS)



Dr Frédérique Belliard  
JOURNAL DEVELOPMENT  
EDITOR (FRANCE)



Dr Goda Sporn  
PUBLISHER  
(GERMANY)



Carianne Buurmeijer  
COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICER (NETHERLANDS)



Guus ten Hagan  
OFFICE ASSISTANT  
(NETHERLANDS)

All of our colleagues at OUP, including our publisher Matt Pacey and our accountant Heather Lawrence



Matt Pacey  
PUBLISHER  
(UK)



Heather Lawrence  
ACCOUNTANT  
(UK)

## COMINGS AND GOINGS

This year saw the arrival of the new chief executive, our Managing Director, Dr Catherine Cotton, and the departure of two members of staff: Laura Dib, who did a fantastic job of administering our grants, and contributed significantly to the development of our Grants Online system; and Barbara Dartee, who had managed the office since April 2007, spearheading a number of projects including the new website and the Grants Online system which debuted in May 2014. We would like to thank both for their excellent work and wish them every success for the future.



