

**The 10th Conference of the European Association for Health
Information and Libraries
(EAHIL)**

*Ioana ROBU¹–Sally WOOD-LAMONT²
Library of the University of Medicine and Pharmaceutics,
Cluj-Napoca*

The 10th Conference of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL) was held in Cluj between 11- 16th September 2006 at the **Academicum Collegium of the Babeş-Bolyai University**. This conference is one of the most important scientific events in Europe in the field of medical library information. It takes place every 2 years, with a participation of over 300 medical librarians, specialists in medical informatics, doctors and other information specialists from all the European countries as well as the USA, Canada and Australia. It was the first time since EAHIL was founded, 20 years ago, that the bi-annual conference was held in an Eastern European country.

This conference was attended by 330 participants from over 36 countries (only 35 came from Romania) and was one of the largest international events ever to take place in Cluj-Napoca and Romania.

Scientific Programme

There were 6 Plenary sessions, 51 oral presentations, 34 Poster Presentations and 6 Empowerment Sessions. This idea of an Empowerment Session was proposed by Eva Alopaeus (Sweden) and Patricia Flor (Norway) as an opportunity for participants to discuss, in depth, certain topics in an interactive environment. The purpose of an empowerment session was to give an overview for participants with different levels of experience with the topic in question. It could have been in the form of a Continuing Education course, a lecture, or a mixture of these presentation forms and was practical rather than theoretical in nature. The facilitators were all well known names in EAHIL with excellent experience in their chosen subjects. In addition, 9 Continuing Education Courses were given by international lecturers and were attended by 140 participants from the 11–12 September in the Medical Informatics Department of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy. On

¹ E-mail: irobu@umfcluj.ro

² E-mail: swood@umfcluj.ro

the first evening a new event was introduced for EAHIL conferences: a First-Timers evening where all new members of EAHIL were encouraged to come along and make friends and meet other people. This was a great success.

Social Programme

The social programme, intended to show the best of Romanian culture and tradition, consisted of an evening featuring a selection of arias from well known operas led by the wonderful soprano Ștefania Barz and included a welcome buffet in the beautiful Romanian National Theatre in the centre of Cluj. There were three afternoon tours, *Walking Tour of Cluj*, *Visit to the Village Museum* and *a Visit to Turda Salt Mine*. At the village museum, the participants were greeted by two men on horseback in full Romanian costume and were given an excellent display of Romanian dancing and singing by a group of children. At the Turda Salt mine four Cluj Academy of Music students gave a wonderful 30 minute concert. The full day tours offering exciting insights into the history and culture of Transylvania were: Alba Iulia & Râmeți monastery, Hunedoara Castle and Lake Cinciș, Biertan & Sighișoara. Two hundred and forty participants enjoyed these tours. The final event was a Gala Dinner in the Hotel Belvedere on top of the one of the hills that surround Cluj, with panoramic views of the city. Again we were able to offer a marvellous display of Romanian dancing and violin playing which brought the whole audience to their feet.

The President of EAHIL, Arne Jakobsson, Director of the Oslo University Library of Medical Sciences said about the conference: "To really describe the success of the 10th EAHIL conference in Cluj you need more superlatives than there are available, even in the English language. I limit myself to outstanding - superb! I hope Sally, Ioana, Benoit and the Local Committee who helped organize the conference received all the superlatives they surely deserved from the conference delegates. The organizers also succeeded in opening our hearts to Cluj and Romania. The overall quality of the scientific programme was excellent. It is very promising for the future that the quality is getting better and better with each succeeding conference. New successful ideas were introduced in Cluj. The reception for first-timers was a huge success and so were the Empowerment Sessions where we could go into depth on one theme. Hopefully they will continue in the future. The Social Programme was outstanding. Opera, gala dinner and sightseeing tours! The organizers had left no stone unturned. They even dragged down a

string quartet into the salt mines, I visited. The acoustics were fantastic. On behalf of EAHIL board and all EAHIL members I wish to thank everyone who helped with organizing the 10th EAHIL conference in Cluj."