

European *Drosophila* Society January 2022 newsletter



Dear members of the European *Drosophila* Society (EDS),

The goal of this message is to give you an update related to the newly created [European *Drosophila* Society](#). You received this message because you have registered to the EDS website. You are also welcome to share it with colleagues even if they are not registered.

1. What has been done so far?

Despite a strong tradition of *Drosophila* research in Europe, there was no structure to coordinate and support research done on this model organism. This made it challenging to organise the European *Drosophila* Research Conferences (EDRC), and to support common infrastructures and initiatives. At the Lausanne EDRC 2019 there was a community discussion session and, based upon a poll following this, the European *Drosophila* Society (EDS) was set up, using the American fly board model. Initiated by Alex Gould, Nic Tapon (EDRC 2017 organisers) and Bruno Lemaitre (EDRC 2019 organizer), the European *Drosophila* Society was launched in April 2021. We describe below the main activities so far:

- Creation of the EDS Website: EDS has a [website](#) hosted by the Francis Crick Institute (London). 825 European Drosophilists have registered to this website, including 438 PIs. On this site you can find information related to the [mission and charters](#) of the EDS, post job advertisements and post/read fly news. While *Drosophila* PIs registered in large numbers, technicians, PhD and post-docs are currently less represented. Their presence is an important facet of our community, so please encourage them to register. An [EDS](#) Twitter account has also been created: @Fly_EDS Please follow and retweet/reply to help spread community news.
- Creation of the European *Drosophila* Board: Fourteen additional PIs, from various countries and working on different topics were co-opted, and joined Alex, Nic and Bruno to form the first [European *Drosophila* Board](#) (EDB). The board also includes the head of Flybase in Europe (Nick Brown), the VDRC (Lisa Meadows) and past and future EDRC organizers. Elections are programmed for 2023 to renew approximately 1/3 of board members to gradually make this board more representative of the European fly community. Board members elected an interim president (B. Lemaitre) and interim vice-president (E. Furlong) with mandates until 2023. The Board met in Paris late September 2021 (generously hosted by the Curie Institute and Pierre Leopold). A significant part of the meeting was used to determine the status, regulation, and a path to sustainability for the EDS. Creation of this new organization also required many discussions concerning the nature of the Board/Presidency, elections, connections with the US fly board, EDRC meetings, Flybase, the VDRC, and also the use of an EDS Twitter account and other communication tools. This meeting also helped to organize EDS [working groups](#), each with a different aim. Board members are your representatives, and you are most welcome to contact them for information or any suggestions about the EDS and the *Drosophila* community in Europe.

- Link between EDS and EDRC: Over the years, the European *Drosophila* Research Conference (EDRC) has become a popular meeting with over 700 participants and a budget of 400.000 Euros. It is clearly a major event for the *Drosophila* community in Europe and beyond. The EDRC has been organized year-to-year by local teams of fly people, and this has not been without financial risk. Each meeting requires a delicate transfer of competence and money (a surplus which has been preserved over the last few meetings to kickstart the next edition). The European *Drosophila* Board will now officially be in charge of choosing the organizing team and the host city (**2023**: Lyon in , **2025**: Alicante , **2027**: open for discussion). For now, the EDS cannot take legal responsibility for the meeting, but it will provide support to the organizers and check that the program reflects the diversity of the fly community. A working group composed of past and future EDRC organizers has been set up to discuss potential improvements and ways to simplify the conference organization (by avoiding re-inventing everything each time as is currently the case!). We are looking forward to meeting you in [Lyon October 20th-23th 2023!](#)
- Working groups: In addition to the EDRC working group, eight other [working groups](#) were created, dealing with
 - European politics and lobbying** (lead: B. Lemaitre)
 - Outreach/education** (lead: Ilona Grunwald Kadow)
 - Resources/tools** (lead: Frank Schnorrer)
 - Fly shipping issues** (lead Alex Gould)
 - Relations with entomological societies** (lead: Luis Teixeira)
 - EDS/EDB organization and regulation** (lead: Alex Gould)
 - EDS Website/communication** (lead Nic Tapon)
 - Election Committee** (lead Nic Tapon).

The idea is to centralize initiatives from the community on these topics. **Importantly, these groups are not restricted to members of the board.** You are welcome to join these groups or contact their members for any suggestion that could promote the fly community.

2. Our priorities for 2022:

Our current priority is to consolidate the EDS by establishing it as a charity/association with a legal status and a formal bank account. This requires coordinating non-profit organization status across various European countries. The fragmentation of European science into multiple local and transnational societies does not help. We are also looking for foundations that could help support the EDS, and are preparing election documents/tools to organize the election of board members in 2023. At the same time, working groups are brainstorming ways to develop *Drosophila* research at the European level.

3. Flybase, VDRC and new European Plasmid Repository:

- Flybase fee: As you know Flybase (located 2/3 in the US and 1/3 in Cambridge (UK, led by Nick Brown)) has experienced serious financial cuts from the US NIH. There is also discussion in the US to merge all model organism databases, an initiative that could lead to the loss of many of the specific strengths of Flybase (e.g. extensive literature curation for reagents, stocks etc.). Considering the importance of Flybase, we encourage all of you to pay the annual fee (about

100€/scientist/year which represents the price of one antibody). See front page of [Flybase](#).

- **VDRC:** The [Vienna Drosophila Research Center](#) is the main fly stock center in Europe and is an important instrument for *Drosophila* research, providing a unique set of tools. The VDRC employs 17 full-time employees, maintains 28.000 fly stocks, and has delivered more than 1.3 million fly stocks since its creation. Despite its success, the financial situation at the VDRC is fragile, funded by Austrian federal support and fly stock fees. To make its collection more attractive, the VDRC is looking for stocks from your labs that are not yet in a public collection but are frequently requested. Please follow this [LINK](#) to donate your stocks. In addition to making the VDRC more sustainable, this will lower your burden of sending out popular stocks!
- **European Plasmid Repository:** Is a new European repository for DNA plasmids established by Aurelio Teleman and colleagues, that will distribute your plasmids for you. Similar to Addgene, recipients are asked to acknowledge your lab in all publications. All plasmids are sent out automatically with MTAs, so you don't risk losing IP and future revenue. On the website, you can easily keep track of all the people that received your plasmids. The more people that submit plasmids the better this repository will be.

To conclude, we wish you all a Happy New Year despite the pandemic, which continues to affect us all. The way we do science is changing rapidly. The pressure from public agencies to do research with short-term translational impacts challenges the funding of basic research on *Drosophila*. Nevertheless, we represent over 400 groups working on *Drosophila* in Europe that are making important contributions to both Life Science and Medical Science, underlining the dynamism in our community – this is a great reason to be optimistic! We hope to make the European *Drosophila* Society an instrument to promote the fly community and foster the values that have made it so successful: scientific passion, excellence and a strong community spirit!

With best regards,

Eileen Furlong and Bruno Lemaitre, on the behalf of the European *Drosophila* Board