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Feature Articles

The History of the European Colloid and Interface Society

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Abstract. The European Colloid and Interface Society (ECIS) was founded in 1986 to provide a European meeting place for scientists interested in colloids and surfaces, including both chemists, physicists, biologists, and colleagues interested in applications. The annual September conferences have from the start attracted strong interest and in recent years 500-1000 scientists from most European countries have attended in addition to several colleagues from Japan, China, USA, Brazil and Australia. ECIS also arranges bi-annual student conferences and deliver awards to senior and younger scientists.

Keywords: Colloid, Interface, Society, European, History, ECIS

INTRODUCTION

The 37th conference of the European Colloid and Interface Society (ECIS) was held in September 2023 in Naples, Italy. On turning back to Italy, where ECIS was founded in 1986, it seems natural to reflect on the background and start of the society. The number of participants in Naples was 570 demonstrating that ECIS is a very vital organization. Actually, the number of participants was not much less than the record number (808 in Rome 2016). Here we analyze the reasons behind the success of ECIS in relation to the motivations behind its creation.

The story of the founding of ECIS has been well described by Mario Corti on the ECIS home page as follows:

“The great success of the Varenna Summer School on the “*Physics of amphiphiles: micelles, vesicles and microemulsions*” in 1983 organised by Vittorio Degiorgio and myself, along with the editing work of its 750 pages proceedings, convinced us that Colloid Science was an interesting field of research with new opportunities for people in physics, chemistry, biology and technology.

The idea that Colloid and Interface Science could deserve an autonomous organisation on a European basis, with the aim to promote and stimulate the exchange of information among scientist of all European countries, was formulated by Vittorio Degiorgio (Pavia, Italy), Heinz Hoffmann (Bay-

reuth, Germany) and Bjorn Lindman (Lund, Sweden) during their return trip from the IUPAC conference held in Manchester on September 1985. This idea found the enthusiastic support of many colleagues, including myself and Pierre Bothorel (Bordeaux, France).

Altogether we decided that it was good to organise a Workshop with the aim to test the feelings of the people active in the field. The first suggestion was to organise it in Varenna on Lake Como, just to take advantage of the fame of the successful School. Eventually, we preferred to locate it in Como, town easy to reach by train from central Europe. Vittorio Degiorgio and myself both provided all the organising work and obtained some local financial support, so that we could have the European Workshop "New Trends in Colloid Science" (Villa Olmo, Como, Italy 1–3 October 1986) free of subscription fees, with free lunches and free conference dinner. "Discussion about the Foundation of a European Colloid Society" ECOS (see picture) was part of the program.

A steering committee, formed by Vittorio Degiorgio, Heinz Hoffmann and Bjorn Lindman, prepared a draft of the statutes and by-laws of ECOS. More than one hundred people attended the Workshop. In the afternoon of October 3, 1986, the Society was founded. That day, the initial name of ECOS was changed into ECIS (European Colloid and Interface Society) and the first general assembly of ECIS was held. The steering committee ceased to operate and the first Council of ECIS was elected: Heinz Hoffmann, Pierre Bothorel and myself. The ECIS Secretariat was initially established in Lund at Bjorn Lindman Institute and successively in Bayreuth at Heinz Hoffmann Institute.

The first Conference of ECIS was scheduled for the following year again in Como (September 2–4, 1987), organised by Vittorio Degiorgio and myself. Again no subscription fees were asked."

Around 1980 there was a strongly increased activity in Europe on various research topics within the field of colloids, notably surfactant self-assembly into micelles, microemulsions, surfactant adsorption and biological membranes; there was also an introduction of new experimental techniques like various NMR and scattering approaches and cryo-electron microscopy. Some countries had important national meetings like Germany and the UK and there was also a series of Scandinavian meetings started by the leading scientist Per Ekwall (professor of Åbo Akademi in Finland and on his retirement creating the Institute of Surface Chemistry in Stockholm). There were several meetings that brought scientists together over the national borders like the Kolloidtagung in Bayreuth in 1983 and the Surfactants in Solution conference in Lund in 1982 and other meetings

in Lund in 1984. Around that time contacts were also established with our French colleagues, in particular with Pierre Bothorel at CRPP in Bordeaux. He and his coworkers came to the Scandinavian meeting in Copenhagen in 1982 and he organized the Surfactants in Solution conference in Bordeaux in 1984.

However, the meetings hosted by our Italian colleagues were particularly important and everyone who attended the Varenna meeting in 1983 will remember the nice atmosphere and the fruitful discussions. Fortunately, Mario Corti and Vittorio Degiorgio documented this in a book still worth studying. As can be learnt from Ref. 1 many leading scientists contributed like Jacob Israelachvili, John Hayter, Peter Pusey, Dominique Langevin, Heinz Hoffmann, Björn Lindman, Manfred Kahlweit, George Benedek, S. H. Chen, Ken Dill, Bill Gelbart, Arieh Ben-Shaul, Charles Tanford, J. A. Reynolds, Pierre Bothorel, Christiane Taupin, and Françoise Candau.

The ground was therefore more or less made when, as Mario describes, Vittorio, Heinz and the author met in Manchester in 1985. However, the significant step was of course that Vittorio and Mario took the work and efforts to invite to the foundation meeting at Lake Como in 1986. There the statutes and plans for coming meetings were made.

It is interesting to note that neither of us (Heinz, Vittorio, Mario and the author) had any established position in the field of colloids at the time. Rather our competence and focus layed on experimental techniques, for Heinz on fast kinetics, for Vittorio and Mario on scattering techniques whereas we in Lund were focusing on novel NMR techniques, like ion NMR and self-diffusion. However, we were brought together by focusing our research on the same systems, namely surfactant self-assemblies, a controversial and emerging field at the time. Surfactant systems were a large part of the presentations at early ECIS conferences but now there is a much larger breadth of topics. Thus, looking in the programs of the first ECIS meetings it can be inferred that the scopes were somewhat limited and reflected to a considerable extent the interests of the founders. Important topics in the field of surfactants studied at the time included theory of self-assembly, molecular interactions involved, dynamics and kinetics of aggregates, aggregate shape and size, rheological properties and relevance for biological systems. Leading scientists in addition to those involved in ECIS include Jacob Israelachvili, Gordon Tiddy, Barry Ninham, Charles Tanford, Håkan Wennerström, Manfred Kahlweit, Kozo Shinoda, Per Ekwall, Krister Fontell, Stig Friberg, Raoul Zana, George Benedek, Françoise Candau, Egon Matijevic, Theo Overbeek, Hans Lyklema, Henk Lekkerkerker, and Dominique Langevin.

ECIS INITIATORS

Several colleagues contributed to the early development of ECIS thus laying the ground for the later success of the organization. The basis lies in their research interests and excellence here described in a few words.

Heinz Hoffmann started his research career in electrochemistry at the TH Karlsruhe and during a post-doc stay he became interested in the field of fast reaction kinetics. He entered the field of colloids by groundbreaking observations on micellar kinetics. Shortly later, in 1975, he became appointed as a full professor to the University of Bayreuth, at that time a newly founded university, where he started the field of physical chemistry and stayed ever after, by now being a professor emeritus there since 2003. Heinz Hoffmann contributed largely to many different fields of colloid science, including micellar growth, phase diagrams, microemulsions and block copolymers during his long scientific career. (See further Ref. 2.) Heinz Hoffmann was always in his career very interested in bridging the gap between fundamental science and its applications, which resulted naturally in many industry collaborations. An openness to the broad scientific community was certainly one of the driving forces why he became one of the founding fathers of ECIS.



Figure 1. Heinz Hoffmann. Courtesy of ECIS.

Vittorio Degiorgio was a physicist by training and made ground-breaking contributions on laser physics and nonlinear optics. He was during a long time professor of physics at the University of Pavia, Italy. His early career took place in Milan at the Polytechnic University but included also a very successful postdoctoral stay at MIT. Vittorio's first important contributions in the field of colloid science came in the end of the 1970's and the early 1980's with studies of surfactant micelles by laser light scattering. During decades he was a leader in colloid science with his scattering studies of different surfactant self-assemblies, in particular micelles

and liquid crystals. Besides his scientific contributions he played a very important role in our scientific community by organizing and hosting conferences and summer schools, like the one in Varenna in 1983 on Physics of Amphiphiles. Vittorio Degiorgio passed away in 2021 after suffering from cancer for several years (Ref. 3).



Figure 2. Vittorio Degiorgio. Courtesy of ECIS.

Björn Lindman started his Ph D work at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm working on new NMR techniques to study electrolyte solutions. His studies included ion NMR and self-diffusion on simple solutions but in particular proteins and amphiphiles. During the 1970s he held a position as a researcher in Biochemical Molecular Spectroscopy at the Swedish Science Research Council and in 1978 he became full professor in physical chemistry at Lund University. The NMR techniques he had learnt proved particularly useful for surfactant systems and at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s he focused his research on micelles and microemulsions (Ref. 4). He shared for a long period his time between Lund and Coimbra University, Portugal. After his retirement from these universities, he held positions at MidSweden University and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is now emeritus professor in Lund and Coimbra.



Figure 3. Björn Lindman. Courtesy of ECIS.

Whereas the idea of ECIS initially came up in a meeting between Heinz Hoffmann, Vittorio Degiorgio and Björn Lindman, two other colleagues played a critical role in the foundation of the society, Mario Corti as organizer of key meetings in Italy, including the meeting in Como for the foundation of ECIS, and Pierre Bothorel as leader and representative of a strong French community of colloids and surfaces; Pierre was involved in the direction of ECIS from the start and also organized the second ECIS conference.

Mario Corti graduated in Physics at the University of Milan, starting his scientific career in the field of low energy nuclear physics, working experimentally at the Van de Graaf accelerator. There he got acquainted with fast electronics and to radiation detection techniques. With the advent of lasers, he shifted to Quantum Electronics. He developed fast correlation techniques to measure properties of optical fields and in 1974 he published the paper describing the first fast real-time digital correlator, ensuring high-performance static, dynamic, polarized and depolarized light scattering experiments. The first applications were on pure fluids and binary mixtures but soon he turned to colloid suspensions, including non-ionic micelles. Mario also pioneered the field of ionic micellar solutions, concerning both the determination of their shape and size near the critical micelle concentration and their role as interesting systems to model interactions in colloidal solutions. Later on, he turned to biologically relevant amphiphiles, namely glycolipids, entering an interdisciplinary field, nearly unexplored at that time, bridging physics and biochemistry. While working in the CISE Research Centre (1965-1986) he performed teaching activity at the Physics Department of the University of Milan, until 1987 when he was appointed Full Professor of Physics at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Pavia. From 1995 to 2011 (year of retirement) he was Full Professor of Medical Physics at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Milan.



Figure 4. Mario Corti. Courtesy of ECIS.

Pierre Bothorel had as a long-term director of Centre de Recherche Paul Pascal a central role in French research in the area. His background was in research by advanced optical techniques on molecular properties, like optical anisotropy. He entered the field of colloid science in studies of conformational states of lipid chains, of phospholipid mono- and bilayers and of biological membranes, while in the early 1980's he made very thorough studies on microemulsions, both on phase behaviour and molecular packing. He was strongly involved in creating scientific contacts on the European level and organized in the 1980's two significant scientific meetings.

The start. In 1983, Vittorio Degiorgio and Mario Corti organized the Course of the Varenna International School "Enrico Fermi" entitled "Physics of Amphiphiles: Micelles, Vesicles and Microemulsions". This was a pioneering event in the field now called nanotechnology. Physicists, physical chemists, biochemists and biologists got together for a couple of weeks with a synergic approach. The Proceedings of the School, edited by V. Degiorgio and M. Corti, were largely appreciated by the scientific community. The ideas born in the Varenna School were developed further in the two Como meetings (again organized by V. Degiorgio and M. Corti) bringing to the conviction that it was the right time for the foundation of a European Society in the colloid field. The 1986 Como meeting was then the founding event of the European Colloid and Interface Society (ECIS). Founders were H. Hoffmann (Germany), P. Bothorel (France), B. Lindman (Sweden), V. Degiorgio (Italy) and M. Corti (Italy), who was in charge of organizing the first ECIS meeting, held in Como in 1987. Mario Corti was President of ECIS during 1989.

The development and continuity of ECIS were very dependent on the support and work of a number of leading colleagues in the field including Conxita Solans, Nalle Rosenholm, Otto Glatter, Aris Xenakis, Thomas Zemb, Brian Vincent, Kenneth Dawson and others. By their regular participation in the conferences and acting as presidents and conference organizers they contributed strongly to ECIS.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

ECIS started very informally with advertisements and invitations through regular mail and personal contacts and much work was carried out by the meeting organizers. At the conferences, in addition to the regular scientific presentations, there was also a general meeting dealing mainly with the location and organization of the

meeting of the coming year, a General Assembly. From the beginning a council consisting of three persons was elected to handle the direction of ECIS. Also, a general secretary of ECIS was appointed. The presidents served for one year initially, but this changed later to 2 years. The first council consisted of Heinz Hoffmann (president), Mario Corti and Pierre Bothorel whereas the first general secretary was Gerd Olofsson, Lund.

The following persons have served as presidents of ECIS:

Tommy Nylander (SE) 2024–2025
 Epameinondas Leontidis (CY) 2022-2023
 Dganit Danino (IL) 2020-2021
 Elena Mileva (BG) 2018-2019
 Piotr Warszynski (PL) 2016-2017
 Debora Berti (IT) 2014-2015
 Reinhard Miller (DE) 2012-2013
 Andrew Howe (UK) 2010-2011
 Maria da Graça Miguel (PT) 2008-2009
 Kenneth Dawson (IR) 2006-2007
 Martin Cohen Stuart (NL) 2004-2005
 Helmut Möhwald (DE) 2003
 Otto Glatter (AT) 2002
 Thomas Zemb (FR) 2001
 Jarl Rosenholm (FI) 2000
 Björn Lindman (SE) 1998-1999
 Conxita Solans (ES) 1997
 Henk Lekkerkerker (NL) 1996
 Peter Schurtenberger (CH) 1995
 Per Stenius (FI) 1994
 Dominique Langevin (FR) 1993
 Peter Laggnier (AT) 1992
 Mats Almgren (SE) 1991
 Ronald H Ottewill (UK) 1990
 Mario Corti (IT) 1989
 Pierre Bothorel (FR) 1988

The ECIS secretariat was initially located in Lund and afterwards for a long period in Bayreuth. ECIS secretaries have been Gerd Olofsson, SE (1987-1989), Heinz Hoffmann, DE, (1990-2000), Jarl Rosenholm, FI (2000-2002), Peter Schurtenberger, CH (2002-2010), Peter A. Kralchevsky, BG (2010-2021) and Pierandrea Lo Nostro, IT (2021-present).

More recently, with the growth of ECIS and the increase of its economy, a position as treasurer has been created and also one as webmaster. Hans-Jürgen Butt, DE (2010-2016), Andreas Fery, DE (2016-2022) and Matthias Karg, DE (2022-) have served as treasurers and Peter Schurtenberger, CH (1994-2002), Otto Glatter, AT (2002-2010), Pierandrea Lo Nostro, IT (2010-2021) and Dominik Horinek, DE (2021-present) as Webmasters.



Figure 5. Jarl Rosenholm, ECIS secretary, president and conference organizer, and Peter Schurtenberger ECIS secretary, president, honorary member and Overbeek Awardee. Courtesy of ECIS.

Membership fees were initially paid individually by the members a procedure found complicated. Therefore, it was arranged that members attending the ECIS conferences could pay their fees together with the registration fee. When ECIS started, contacts between East and West were still restricted causing problems of conference participation but also in handling membership fees.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

As touched upon above there existed long before ECIS strong national organizations in the field in a few countries like Germany (Kolloid-Gesellschaft) and UK (Colloid&Interface Science Group) in particular. The meetings of those attracted a limited number of participants from other countries. In addition, there were a limited number of larger meetings in different countries but without regularity and coordination.

The first major international regular conferences in colloid and interface science started in the 1970s in Budapest and Puerto Rico, USA and these together with a group within the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) and a newsletter due to Hans Lyklema, formed the basis of Geoff Parfitt taking the initiative to form IACIS, the International Association of Colloid and Interface Scientists. The official foundation took place in the conference in Stockholm in 1979. IACIS has grown into a strong global association with tri-annual conferences all over the world (including the US, Australia, Brazil, Japan, China, and several European countries). A photo of the founders of IACIS is given in Figure 6.

When the plans for ECIS came up it was natural that its relation to IACIS was considered. Some lead-

ing members of IACIS suggested that ECIS should be a section of IACIS, but the final solution was that the two organizations sent a representative to the council of the other organization. The participation of IACIS and ECIS conferences has from the beginning been strongly overlapping and this concerns also the management. Per Stenius, Reinhard Miller and Björn Lindman have been presidents of both organizations.

One of the founders of IACIS was Hans Lyklema from Wageningen in the Netherlands. He was also in other respects a key figure in creating relations in the international community. Noting the difficulties for scientists from the Eastern European countries in attending conferences outside the Warsaw bloc he started a series of conferences, European Chemistry at Interfaces (ECIC). These conferences alternated between western and eastern Europe and were very successful not only for the creation of contacts and collaboration in Europe but also had very good attendance. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the motivation for these separate conferences decreased and a merging with ECIS was natural.



Figure 7. Hans Lyklema. Courtesy of ECIS.

ECIS LOGO

In 2012 it was decided to consider a renewal of the original ECIS logo and at the General Assembly in Malmö new proposals were presented. In a voting including the old logo and 3 new proposals the current logo was elected. The designers of the new ECIS logo are Ana Kroflič and Robert Rep from the Department of Physical Chemistry, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.



Figure 6. First IACIS Council at the foundation in Stockholm 1979. From left: Alexi Scheludko (Bulgaria), Boris Deryagin (USSR), Hans Lyklema (Netherlands), Tom Healy, Geoff Parfitt, Lisbeth Ter-Minassian-Saraga (France), Erwin Wolfram (Hungary), Per Stenius (Sweden), Armin Weiss (West Germany), Božo Tezak (Croatia, Yugoslavia), Egon Matijevic (USA) and Eiji Suito (Japan). Not shown are Alex Silberberg (Israel) and Gabor Somorjai (USA) as well as the secretary H.O. Becker (Germany).

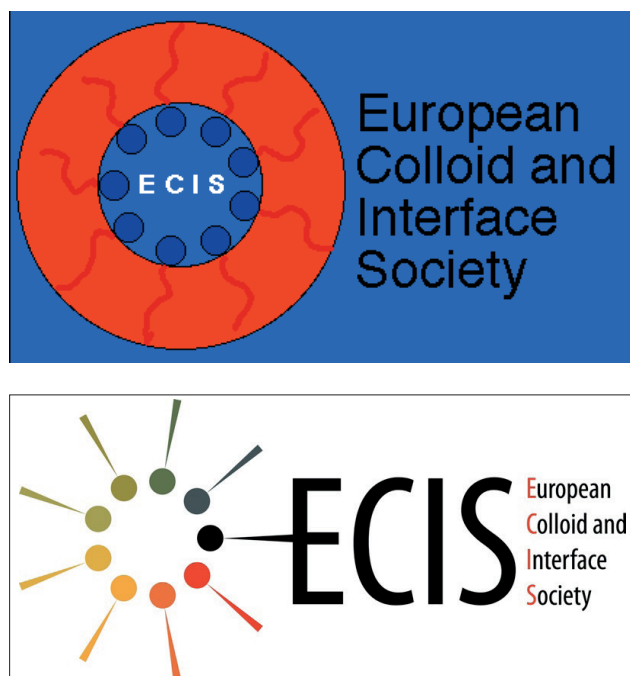


Figure 8. Previous and current ECIS logos. Courtesy of ECIS

CONFERENCES

The annual ECIS conferences taking place in September have been widely spread over Europe as can be seen from this list:

2024: Copenhagen (DK)
 2023: Naples (IT)
 2022: Chania (Crete, GR)
 2021: Athens (GR)
 2020: *Online Event (IL)*
 2019: Leuven (BE)
 2018: Ljubljana (SLO)
 2017: Madrid (ES)
 2016: Roma (IT)
 2015: Bordeaux (FR)
 2014: Limassol (CY)
 2013: Sofia (BG)
 2012: Malmö-Lund (SE)
 2011: Berlin (DE)
 2010: Prague (CZ)
 2009: Antalya (TR)
 2008: Krakow (PL)
 2007: Geneva (CH)
 2006: Budapest (HU)
 2005: Geilo (NO)
 2004: Almeria (ES)

2003: Firenze (IT)
 2002: Paris (FR)
 2001: Coimbra (PT)
 2000: Patras (GR)
 1999: Dublin (IE)
 1998: Dubrovnik (HR)
 1997: Lunteren (NL)
 1996: Turku (FI)
 1995: Barcelona (ES)
 1994: Montpellier (FR)
 1993: Bristol (UK)
 1992: Graz (AT)
 1991: Mainz (DE)
 1990: Copanello (IT)
 1989: Basel (CH)
 1988: Arcachon (FR)
 1987: Como (IT)

No less than 24 countries have hosted ECIS conferences; the countries particularly active are Italy (the 2023 conference was the 5th), France (3), Greece (3) and Spain (3).

In early ECIS meetings a principle was to avoid parallel oral sessions to stimulate discussions; with the increasing number of participants this principle had soon to be abandoned. Another principle was to promote oral presentations from younger researchers. The increasing number of young scientists motivated the creation of a separate forum for them, the ECIS Student Conferences. These biannual conferences were started by Brian Vincent in 2003 and have been organized in Italy, Bulgaria, UK, Sweden (2), Poland, Hungary, Spain, Germany, and The Netherlands; see below.

THE FIRST DECADE OF ECIS

Contributions to the Como workshop in 1986 where ECIS was officially founded were collected in a new series of Progress in Colloid and Polymer Science named New Trends in in Colloid Science (<https://www.springer.com/series/2882>). This series of volumes was initiated by Heinz Hoffmann who also edited this first volume. The first ECIS conference in 1987 was documented in the same way in a volume edited by Vittorio Degiorgio and this tradition followed for many subsequent meetings. Partly because of the growth of ECIS meetings and the strongly increased number of contributions publications from recent meetings have been less systematic and spread over special issues of different journals like Journal of Molecular Liquids, Colloids and Surfaces A and B, Polymers and Nanomaterials.

From the start, ECIS conferences attracted wide participation from leading groups of chemists and physicists

in several European countries, clearly demonstrating that the creation of ECIS filled a strong need. As mentioned, earlier ECIS conferences were well documented in *New Trends in Colloid Science*. From these we can infer a broad coverage of topics and an emphasis on fundamental aspects. Many early contributions concerned self-assembly in amphiphilic systems- surfactants, lipids, and block copolymers- but also processes at interfaces, and dispersions were well covered. With time a broader coverage of colloid and interface science, including biological aspects and applications, can be noticed.

The workshop in Como where ECIS was founded was attended by 100 scientists from 14 countries who presented 50 papers, most of them published in the volume edited by Heinz Hoffmann. The first ECIS conference (Como, 1987) was attended by 130 participants from 17 European countries who presented about 100 papers in oral and poster sessions; the largest groups of participants were from Italy, Germany, France, and Sweden. The scientific contents mainly covered colloids, amphiphile solutions and interfaces, with a majority in the field of the self-assembly of surfactants and other amphiphiles. The interest in ECIS increased strongly for the second conference (Arcachon, 1988) where there were 220 participants and more than 150 presentations with a broader scope. The subsequent meeting (Basel, 1989) attracted close to 250 participants who presented more than 100 papers in oral and poster sessions, again with a large part on the self-assembly in different colloidal systems. Coming back to Italy (Copanello, 1990) in the following meeting, the large interest continued, and the scope broadened; the conference saw more than 150 papers representing 21 countries; several contributions concerned biologically relevant systems and mixed colloids like polymer-surfactant systems. In the 1991 ECIS conference (Mainz) there were 300 participants representing 17 countries whereas the following meeting (Graz, 1992) attracted 284 participants from 28 countries. In Bristol 1993 there were 159 participants from 20 countries and in Montpellier 1994 nearly 300 participants giving 50 oral and more than 200 poster presentations. The ECIS conference in Barcelona in 1995 saw a new record participation (320 scientists from 30 countries) and 301 papers (70 oral and 231 poster presentations). The following meeting in Turku, Finland had 253 participants from 27 countries.

Participation in meetings depends on factors like the site, mainly attractiveness, accessibility and standing of colloid and interface science in the host country; it is natural that smaller countries in the outskirts of Europe have more difficulties in attracting a large number of participants. Another factor is the competition with other conferences; in years of the triannual IACIS conferences participation has generally been lower.

The organization of an ECIS conference is a demanding task requiring a lot of work. An important reason why the society has developed so well is the willingness of many members to host conferences. Thus, the General Assembly has always had a number of proposals to consider. Whereas the early conferences were mainly taking place in larger and central countries, progressively more meetings were held in smaller countries and in the outskirts of Europe, like Austria, Croatia, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Portugal, Poland, and Turkey. Despite sometimes a remote location, the participation in ECIS conferences has always been quite large: the Antalya meeting in 2009 had 400 participants in spite of the long trip for many. Clearly a central location and attractiveness of a city plays a role, as can be judged from the especially high numbers of the meetings in Prague in 2010 (600 participants) and Rome in 2016 (more than 800). In recent years there have been an increasing number of participants from outside Europe, in particular Japan, USA and Australia.

EVENTS FOR YOUNG SCIENTISTS

From the beginning an important aspect of ECIS was to promote the careers of young scientists; many Ph D students have given their first scientific presentations at ECIS conferences. By the initiation of the European Student Conferences, ECIS has broadened the participation of younger scientists. The 19th ESC Conference will be organized in Bordeaux in 2024. The student conferences are mainly organized and chaired by students and the attendance of senior scientists is limited. An important promoter of this ECIS activity is Brian Vincent in Bristol.

ESC conferences have been given as follows:

2024	Bordeaux, France
2022	Szeged, Hungary
2019	Varna, Bulgaria
2017	Firenze, Italy
2015	Krakow, Poland
2013	Potsdam, Germany
2011	Falkenberg, Sweden
2009	Almeria, Spain
2007	Ven (island), Sweden
2005	Biezenmortel, TheNetherlands
2003	Bristol, UK

An additional activity of ECIS, mainly for younger scientists, is the courses on different topics regularly held prior to the annual conferences. A large number of Ph D students participate every year.

AWARDS

When ECIS became well established and attracted leading scientists in the field the need to honor important contributions and careers arose naturally. Three awards to senior scientists have been established, the Solvay Award (from 2001), the Overbeek Gold Medal (from 2006) and the ECIS-Lyklema Prize (from 2020); in addition there are several awards to younger scientists for best oral and poster presentations. Lately these are offered by the Bulgarian Academy of Science (Exerowa-Platikanow award), the Enzo Ferroni Foundation (Ferroni award), the journal *Substantia* (ECIS-Substantia award), Elsevier (for poster), Polymer MDPI and the Royal Society of Chemistry (see the website of ECIS: www.ecis-web.eu).

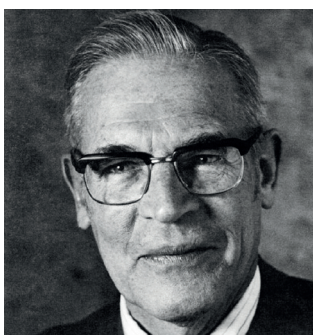


Figure 9. Theo Overbeek. Courtesy of ECIS.

In 2005 ECIS created the Overbeek Gold Medal to acknowledge excellent careers in, and inspiring contributions to, the field of colloid and interface science; it is named after Theo Overbeek a pioneer in colloid science. The prize is awarded annually. The Overbeek Medal is supported by the Overbeek Foundation, with donations from the Overbeek family as well as different partners, including Philips, Procter&Gamble, Nikko Chemical, DSM-Firmenich, Altana, BASF, AkzoNobel, Unilever, Albemarle, Shell, NanoScolo, Anton Paar, PTN and the Eindhoven University of Technology). The Overbeek Gold Medal honours leadership and scientific excellence in the field of colloid and interface science over an entire career. Hence the Overbeek Gold Medal recognizes extended periods of scientific excellence that have had an outstanding impact on this field. Recipients of the Overbeek Gold Medal have been

2024 Reinhard Strey (Cologne)
 2023 Bernard P. Binks (Hull)
 2022 Hans-Jürgen Butt (Mainz)
 2021 Jacob Klein (Rehovot)
 2020 Peter Schurtenberger (Lund)
 2019 Yeshayahu Talmon (Haifa)
 2018 Henk Lekkerkerker (Utrecht)

2017 Thomas Zemb (Marcoule)
 2016 Piero Baglioni (Firenze)
 2015 Mario Corti (Milano)
 2014 Barry W. Ninham (Canberra)
 2013 Otto Glatter (Graz)
 2012 Dominique Langevin (Paris)
 2011 Heinz Hoffmann (Bayreuth)
 2010 Brian Vincent (Bristol)
 2009 Gerard Fleer (Wageningen)
 2008 Björn Lindman (Lund)
 2007 Helmuth Möhwald (Golm)
 2006 Håkan Wennerström (Lund)



Figure 10. Håkan Wennerström, first recipient of the Overbeek Gold Medal. Courtesy of ECIS.



Figure 11. Helmut Möhwald, ECIS conference organizer, president and second recipient of the Overbeek Gold Medal. Courtesy of ECIS.



Figure 12. In 2009 Gerhard Fleer (center) was awarded the Overbeek Gold Medal. Courtesy of ECIS.

The ECIS-Rhodia Prize was first awarded in 2001. After Solvay acquired Rhodia, since 2014 the official name of the prize has become “Colloid & Interface Science Award, sponsored by Solvay“. This prize is granted to a European scientist for original scientific work of outstanding quality, described in one or several publications, patents or other documents made public in the previous five years. Hence, the prize is for recent work within the field of colloid and interface science. The recipients of the prize have been.

2024 Frieder Mugele (Twente)
 2023 Regine von Klitzing (Darmstadt)
 2022 Patrick Warren (Unilever)
 2021 Jan Vermant (Zürich)
 2020 Wilson C-K Poon (Edinburgh)
 2019 Nikolai Denkov (Sofia)
 2018 Horst Weller (Hamburg)
 2017 Steven P. Armes (Sheffield)
 2016 Shlomo Magdassi (Jerusalem)
 2015 Julian Eastoe (Bristol)
 2014 Helmut Cölfen (Konstanz)
 2013 Luis M. Liz-Marzán (San Sebastián)
 2012 Werner Kunz (Regensburg)
 2011 Bernard P. Binks (Hull)
 2010 Gero Decher (Strasbourg)
 2009 George S. Attard (Southampton)
 2008 Gordon J. Tiddy (Manchester)
 2007 Peter Schurtenberger (Fribourg)
 2006 Alfons van Blaaderen (Utrecht)
 2005 Peter Pusey (Edinburgh)
 2004 Thomas Zemb (Saclay)
 2003 Henk Lekkerkerker (Utrecht)
 2002 Piero Baglioni (Firenze)
 2001 Kåre Larsson (Lund)



Figure 13. Dominique Langevin, president and only female recipient of the Overbeek Gold Medal. Courtesy of ECIS.

The ECIS-Lyklema Prize is named in honour of Johannes Lyklema, for his excellent science and leadership. The ECIS-Lyklema Prize is granted to an ECIS scientist with proven scientific excellence who additionally devoted long-time, sustained and exceptional efforts to ECIS organizational activities and colloid community development. The ECIS-Lyklema prize is awarded every 4-5 years and was given to Peter Kralchevsky in 2020. The second Lyklema prize has been awarded to Björn Lindman in 2024.

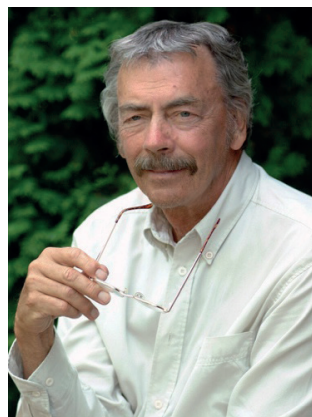


Figure 14. Kåre Larsson, first ECIS awardee (Rhodia prize, 2001). Courtesy of ECIS.



Figure 15. Peter Kralchevsky, secretary and recipient of the first ECIS-Lyklema Prize. Courtesy of ECIS.

In 2018 the European Colloid and Interface Society and the Department of Interfaces and Colloids in the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences created the Exerowa-Platikanov Award for a young scientist. The prize honours the long-term achievements of Dotchi Exerowa and Dimo Platikanov.



Figure 16. Dotchi Exerowa and Dimo Platikanov. Courtesy of ECIS.

CONCLUSION

The European Colloid and Interface Society quickly emerged as an important forum for creating interactions between scientists in a rapidly developing field. Not least has it helped younger scientists to get acquainted with the research frontier and to establish fruitful contacts beneficial for their careers. ECIS has involved essentially all of the European countries. The relevance of ECIS is demonstrated by the increasing number of participants in both regular conferences and in student conferences.

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