



# Newsletter

*of the European Society for Artificial Organs*

## Letter from the President

### ESAO Newsletter

**June 2025**

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Pedro M. Baptista

The excitement is mounting - our annual congress is just around the corner. Dimitrios Stamatialis and the programme committee have put together a great programme under the motto INNOVATIONS IN (BIO)ARTIFICIAL ORGANS AND ORGAN MODELS, and I am sure that he and his local organizing committee have also prepared the congress perfectly. So: let's go to Enschede, it will be exciting again!

The last congress in Aachen in 2024 was very well received and was ultimately even able to close with a financial plus. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone once again for their active participation and great contributions.

There have also been some organizational changes since the last newsletter from September 2024. Sebastian Jansen and Marc Müller stepped down from the Board by rotation, and Johanna Clauser from the Department of Cardiovascular Engineering at RWTH Aachen University in Aachen, Germany, and Krzysztof Zieliński from the Nałęcz Institute of Biocybernetics and Biomedical Engineering in Warsaw at the Polish Academy of Sciences were elected as their replacements. Ulrich Kertzsch was also re-elected for a second term. We warmly welcome our new governors Johanna and Krzysztof and look forward to working with them. At the same time, our Treasurer Tom Verbelen was re-elected for a second term. He has fulfilled this role in an exemplary manner and with great commitment, so we would like to thank him for his work to date and are happy that he will continue for another term.

We would also like to thank the retiring governors Sebastian and Marc for their great commitment, Sebastian as co-organizer of last year's congress and the poster sessions in Aachen, and Marc for organizing and coordinating the ESAO webinars, which ever since have attracted great interest from participants from all over the world and far beyond the ESAO. He has agreed to continue this task, for which we are very grateful.

In our last newsletter, we had already announced that we would like to define the election procedure for our officers more clearly, especially for the President-elect. We also wanted to give the members of yESAO a stronger voice. After discussing corresponding measures in our Board of Governors and presenting them to you for a vote at the last General Assembly, we have now officially implemented these measures in our statutes, and they have

thus officially become effective. The election of the next President-elect is already taking place in accordance with the new regulations, and the two yESAO coordinators have also become full voting members of the Board. We are particularly pleased about this, as the yESAO is not only the future of our society, it is also particularly active.

Our society lives first and foremost from the people and - like many others - their regular meetings at schools and congresses. They are the annual highlights at which we not only present and discuss our research results, but above all expand our scientific and personal networks and even friendships. This is not only important for Europe with its different cultures, but also worldwide in today's times, in which science is increasingly being questioned even by governments and undermined by fake news. In this respect, we are particularly pleased that we are always able to welcome international scientists to our congresses and network with them.

We are therefore particularly pleased that Tom Verbelen and his team have agreed to organize a Winter School in February 2026. You can find more information on the following pages of this newsletter.

However, we have still not received any applications to host the main congress in 2026. We would like to take this opportunity to ask all members once again to apply to host the event. From our personal experience, the Aachen team can assure you that it is very rewarding. It brings your team closer together by following a common goal, it makes you proud to showcase yourself as a team and your city as your home, and it reflects your work by sharing your achievements with the scientific community. And it is something you will remember with pride for the rest of your life. So: apply for ESAO 2026, there is still plenty of time!

It also fills me with pride that I was able to serve this society as President. My term will come to an end in the next few days and I will hand over the baton and the insignia to Dimitrios Stamatialis. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for the great trust that you as members have placed in me. It was certainly a highlight of my professional career, which will end at the end of next month with my retirement as Head of the Department of Cardiovascular Engineering of the RWTH Aachen University. Of course, I already have lots of plans and am really looking forward to "the time after", but I will certainly always remain loyal to ESAO.

With kind regards,

Ulrich Steinseifer  
ESAO President

## **ESAO Elections 2025 Candidates**

This year, once again, the ESAO elections are run exclusively online with one Governor position available, a new Treasurer, and a President-Elect. You can, and you should vote on the online link provided to you by ESAO (if you have your annual fees in good order) until June 25 at 23:59. If you didn't receive this link, please contact Anita Aichinger ([anita.aichinger@donau-uni.ac.at](mailto:anita.aichinger@donau-uni.ac.at)) at once.

## Candidate for Governor of the Board of ESAO

### Florin Alexandru Plesoianu (Romania)



Dedicated for advancing mechanical circulatory assistance therapy with over 20 years of multidisciplinary experience in systems engineering, medical device innovation, technology transfer and business administration. Specializes in the development of artificial organs - mechanical circulatory support devices. An active contributor to international research and education, with proven leadership in multidisciplinary teams and recognized excellence in design and innovation.

## Candidate for Treasurer of ESAO

Marcus Granegger, PhD, is a tenure-track Group Leader in Cardiac Surgery at the Medical University of Vienna. A biomedical engineer focused on mechanical circulatory support (MCS), he studies cardio-device interactions and designs new systems for patients with no other options, notably children with congenital heart disease. He has served on the ESAO Board for six years, and seeks now to keep helping our society as treasurer.



## Candidate for President-Elect of ESAO



Tom Verbelen, MD, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KU Leuven) and an Associate Head of Clinic and Supervisor of Cardiac Surgery at the University Hospital Leuven, Belgium. He was the President of yESAO between 2014-2016, a former Board Member Governor between 2018-2020 and the Treasurer of ESAO since 2020. He's now running for President-Elect of our society.

**Update on the 51st ESAO Meeting 2025 in Enschede, The Netherlands**

**ESAO 2025 – Innovations in (bio)artificial organs and organ models**



From June 25 to 28, 2025 [ESAO 2025](https://www.esao2025.com) will take place at the TechMed Centre, University of Twente in the Netherlands. This leading international conference brings together researchers, clinicians, engineers, and industry partners from across the world to explore the latest innovations in (bio)artificial organs and advanced organ models.

The [four-day programme](#) includes seven symposia, more than twenty scientific sessions, over ten keynote lectures, and contributions from more than one hundred speakers. A major highlight of ESAO 2025 is the series of four plenary lectures by internationally renowned experts: Steve Ash (HemoCleanse Technologies, USA) will share insights into the ups and downs of medical device development, Shuvo Roy (UCSF, USA) will present a visionary talk on the future of artificial organs, Andries van der Meer (University of Twente, NL) will explore the role of organs-on-chips in drug development, and Cristiano Amarelli (Monaldi Hospital, IT) will discuss innovative (bio)artificial heart replacement strategies. Alongside the programme, ESAO 2025 features a poster session and the Innovation Square, where participants can experience live demonstrations, connect with companies, and discover the latest technologies in the field.

As organ failure continues to be a major global health challenge, ESAO 2025 highlights groundbreaking work in artificial kidneys, heart pumps, liver models, microfluidics, and organ-on-chip platforms, while also addressing ethical and societal questions around emerging technologies. We invite you to be part of this unique gathering where disciplines converge, new collaborations emerge, and the future of healthcare takes shape.

You can also check our communication toolkit page: <https://www.esao2025.com/downloads/>

Dimitrios Stamatialis  
Congress President

**yESAO Congress 2025 and news**

## yESAO Congress 2025

We are excited to invite you to the upcoming yESAO Conference, taking place on June 24-25 in Enschede, The Netherlands. This event offers a fantastic opportunity for young researchers and

students to connect, share innovative ideas, and explore the latest developments in the field of artificial organs.

#### Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>:

The yESAO Congress will begin with the opening remarks by the yESAO coordinators and the current ESAO Congress president. Afterwards, yESAO attendees will present their research topics to the audience during the pitch session in a unique format: a three-minute, one-slide presentation with no animation that uses simple language to make complex topics accessible to all. This year, the audience and a jury will evaluate these presentations, and the best pitch will win a prize. Moreover, we will announce the best pitches in three different categories: Clarity of Content, Slide Design, and Body Language and Confidence. After this, we will have our networking lunch to enhance research exchange, keeping the yESAO Exchange Award in mind, and to engage with scientific groups from other institutions. Interactive networking activities will help the participants to discover potential research overlaps and foster collaborations. After lunch, we will proceed with the traditional lab visits. yESAO attendees will have a unique opportunity to gain insight into the labs at UT. We will visit the Engineering Organ Support Technologies Lab, the Rapid Prototyping Lab, and the Advanced Organ Bioengineering and Therapeutics (AOT) Lab in the Horst Building on campus. At the TechMed Center, we will visit the hybrid operating room, the e-health home, the simulated intensive care unit, and the simulation center. These rooms and labs are primarily used to train technical medicine students and will provide insights into current MedTech applications. Afterwards, Salomé Sanchez will introduce design processes and explain how to translate requirements into concepts using creativity tools for ideation and prototyping. In the second part of this workshop, participants will present their results to each other, showcasing different approaches. At the end of the first day, we will have our traditional yESAO dinner at the sports canteen, which is located on campus, close to our venue. As always, there will be more opportunities for conversation and dancing at the yESAO party afterwards at the Vestingbar.

#### Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>:

To start off the second day of this year's yESAO, we will have a short get-together over coffee to reflect on the first day, after which we will head into the keynotes. We are pleased to present the first keynote with the topic "Suddenly Professor: Serious Job or Huge Playground," by Prof. Dr. Jutta Arens of the University of Twente. Prof. Arens will share her journey in academia and provide valuable insights on the benefits and responsibilities of becoming a professor. The conference will then continue with the second keynote session, featuring Dr. Jelmer Wolterink from the University of Twente. In his presentation "From AI Hype to Clinical Impact: Riding the Wave Wisely," Dr. Wolterink will outline the challenges of dealing with AI in the medical world and the different paths one can take. After lunch, we will attend our second workshop: "Sketch to Impact: The Art of the Graphical Abstract". Luuk van Ewijk will guide us through the process of designing graphical abstracts that translate research content into images and create visually attractive abstracts. The conference will conclude with closing remarks and the announcement of the Pitch Session winner. This will be followed by an optional campus walk and the official ESAO opening ceremony.

We look forward to your participation as we explore the future of artificial organs together!

Isabell, Tom, and the yESAO core team

It has been some time since the last newsletter, and a lot has happened in yESAO. We have been busy organizing the yESAO conference, investing a great deal of time and effort into the respective subgroups to ensure a successful event at this year's yESAO and ESAO conferences. In preparation, the yESAO core team met in Valencia at the beginning of May for an intensive planning session to discuss and finalize the conference agenda. The result was a varied program for the yESAO conference full of new ideas. Given yESAO's success in past years, we are proud of the positive response and look forward to lively exchanges. The core team currently consists of 19 members who put a lot of effort into planning our annual conference, as well as maintaining the vibrancy of our society. We would like to thank everyone who is or has been part of this amazing team, and we welcome anyone interested in joining to contact us.

As our two-year term as yESAO coordinators comes to an end with this year's conference, we will hand over the task to our successors. We would like to thank everyone we met during this period for their commitment and support over the past two years and hope they continue to keep the community active. We learned a lot in these two years, and we will stay in touch with everyone for as long as possible. The new coordinator duo will be announced at yESAO in Enschede, and we wish them the best in advance. Enjoy your time in yESAO and make the most of it!

Isabell and Tom

### **Call for organizers of the ESAO Congress 2026**

A call has been made for candidates interested in organizing the ESAO Congress 2026. So far, we haven't received any expression of interest. Hence, we ask again all our members for expressions of interest in organizing our next yearly event. Please let us know as soon as possible. Thanks!

### **ESAO Winter School 2026**

UZ Leuven – KU Leuven is happy to announce the ESAO Winterschool 2026 will take place from February 25<sup>th</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup> in Leuven, Belgium. The ESAO Winterschool will address the topic of Artificial Lungs. Local renowned experts in the field have already confirmed their participation: Prof. Dr. Laurens Ceulemans (Lung Transplant Surgeon), Prof. Dr. Arne Neyrinck (Ventilation strategies), Prof. Dr. Laurent Godinas (End-stage Lung Failure specialist) and Dr. Michaela Orlitová (Animal models and right ventricular-lung interaction). International speakers have been invited to talk about design and development of artificial lung technology, addressing current oxygenator technology and the field of microfluidics. The Winterschool aims to educate and teach about both research and medical aspects as well as to set up collaborations between researchers, clinicians and institutions across Europe. A specific session to search for collaborations will be organized.

Tom Verbelen (on behalf of the organizing committee)."





SAVE THE DATE

# ESAO WINTER SCHOOL Artificial lungs

Wednesday February 25th – Saturday February 28th, 2026

Leuven, Belgium



KU LEUVEN

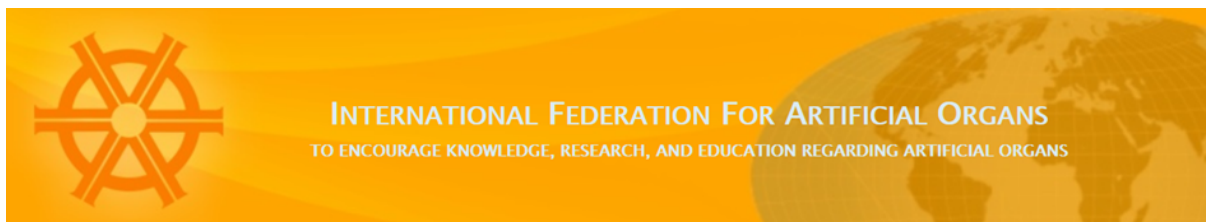
UZ LEUVEN

## IFAO news

Dear ESAO member,

We are pleased to announce the **Transcontinental Scholarship**, sponsored by IFAO, the **International Federation for Artificial Organs**, of which ESAO is one of the member societies.

This scholarship is designed to support young investigators who wish to conduct research in a laboratory located on another continent.



It offers a great opportunity to advance your career and build an international network within the artificial organs community.

If you are interested, you find more information in the attachment or on [IFAO website](#).

We wish you much success!

## ESAO Members Corner

### ESAO Members Corner

"Spanish thematic network TEVIMO ("Tissue engineering approaches for the development of healthy and pathological *in vitro* tissue models"), coordinated by ESAO Member Prof. Gloria Gallego-Ferrer, is looking for international collaborations. TEVIMO started this May 2025 with a goal to link twelve research groups in Spain in the field of *in vitro* models of healthy and pathological tissues. Are you a researcher at academia or industry interested in this field? Does your work relate to *in vitro* models for biological and medical research or as preclinical tools for the development of pharmaceutical products?

We are looking to share expertise around the engineering of *in vitro* systems, biofabrication strategies, and biomaterials, gather feedback and guidance about scalability, regulatory compliance, commercial requirements of applications, discuss novel scientific ideas and ultimately the joint preparation of new R&D proposals.

Contact: Prof. Gloria Gallego-Ferrer at [ggallego@ter.upv.es](mailto:ggallego@ter.upv.es) and Dr. Andrés Alba-Pérez at [aalba@upvnet.upv.es](mailto:aalba@upvnet.upv.es)

## Announcements



The poster features a central illustration of a robotic hand holding a pair of glowing blue artificial lungs. Surrounding the lungs are various medical and technological icons, including a human figure, a brain, a heart, a DNA helix, and a microscope. The background is dark blue with a grid of light blue lines.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**ESAO WINTER SCHOOL**

**Artificial lungs**

**Wednesday February 25th – Saturday February 28th, 2026**

**Leuven, Belgium**

The bottom of the poster shows a light blue silhouette of a cityscape with a prominent church spire. Logos for the European Society for Artificial Organs (ESAO), KU Leuven, and UZ Leuven are displayed at the bottom.

Sherry S. Medical Care International (2025)



51<sup>st</sup> Congress

**ESAO 2025**

*Innovations in (Bio)Artificial  
Organs and Organ Models*

June 24-28, 2025  
University of Twente – Enschede  
The Netherlands

[www.esao2025.com](http://www.esao2025.com)



Advanced  
Organ bioengineering &  
Therapeutics

