ESOF 2014 Brief report – Luiz Sérgio F. de Carvalho (Brazil)

ESOF 2014 has definitely contributed to: (i) enhance my comprehension on the importance of scientific communication to the society and how citizens from all over the world are eager for improving their scientific knowledge; (ii) teach me how to communicate effectively with citizens in order to captivate them; (iii) develop a network for scientific communication within my country mates; (iv) thoughts on ethical issue related to medical practice, including genetic profiling for breast cancer and primary prevention of malignant tumors; (v) make me think about my career, job opportunities within academia, pharmaceutical industry as well as guiding some practical steps if I consider spinning off university and building my own company; (vi) improve my knowledge about IP, patents, copyright, etc; (vii) networking with professors and important players from Pharma during picnics and other social events.

On Saturday my plane was delayed so I could not join ESOF in that day. By the next day, I attended to the career sessions (“Excellence in European doctoral education”, “New concepts of mobility to foster career development and gender balance in Europe”, “Dual career services and early career researchers” and “To be or not to be too many PhDs: what is a PhD for?”) and got very impressed by the high level of discussions involving both what the companies expect from the PhDs and where are the roles for PhDs after the university in modern times. Unfortunately, most of the sessions on that day were not related to my field (medical career), but there were several useful messages and many though provoking speeches. I also participated on the Opening ceremony and our Get-together grantees session.

On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday I joined four types of sessions that I grouped into: (i) ethics and medical practice insights; (ii) innovation, business and IP; (iii) communication; and (iv) science and sustainability. The first group of sessions (“Health Science 2020: how health diplomacy drives business and innovation”, “The power, limitations and future of genetic profiling and cancer prevention”, “Personalized medicine: patient involvement, engagement and empowerment”, “Shared early life origin of common immune disorders”) made me think about the complexity of the challenge of
meeting society needs from any perspective, as a scientist or as a medical doctor. The sessions had great presentations, but in one of them ("The power, limitations and future of genetic profiling and cancer prevention") the following ethics discussions were below expectations.

The second group ("I owe my business to my frustration as a scientist", "How do big companies get new ideas?", "Unconventional science innovators" and "Why IP matters to researchers?") was in fact very original to me, showing in a practical manner what young entrepreneurs have learned about their initiatives and how did they manage to achieve success. Indeed, the other sessions complemented that showing how big companies interact with academia and smaller companies, and when a patent becomes necessary to a company with a very basic approach. These presentations were definitely the most important to me.

The communication group ("The future of science communication") was outstanding! One of my country mates, Átila Iamantino, and another two other speakers showed how did they made to improve the strategy of reaching large communities with scientific content. In that opportunity I had the chance of meeting Átila and invited him to a VC with my mentor and me back in Brazil. The sustainability group ("Fact based world view", "A bio-based society: the vision and how we get there", "Art, science and innovation: piloting new modes of public interaction" and "Creativity in science: what is it and can it be willed?") was also above expectations due to the quality of the speakers and the high level of the discussions after the talks.