

REPORT

Spring Travelling Fellowship

Croatia
22 - 30 April, 2015

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Introduction:

The EFORT Spring Travelling Fellowship Croatia 2015 took place in Dubrovnik, Osijek and Zagreb, from April 22nd to April 30th. It was an honor to be chosen by the Portuguese Orthopaedics and Traumatology Society (SPOT) to represent Portugal. We were a total of **13 participating fellows** from all over Europe: Slovenia, Slovakia, Macedonia, Malta, Ukraine, Lithuania, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Serbia, United Kingdom, Turkey and Germany/Switzerland (the 14th fellow from Norway missed).

Detailed description of the fellowship:

We were very warmly welcomed by the organizers in all the different Croatian cities and they were all very interested in teaching us and share knowledge, showing us their work, as well as learning from our experiences, always promoting interaction and discussion.

We had an additional bonus with the opportunity to participate in the SEEFORT Meeting at Dubrovnik in the first few days (from April 22nd to April 25th) that allowed us to contact and meet with more European Experts with the privilege of being in a special position featured as EFORT fellows. The Croatian team organizers made sure we all had direct and special privilege access to interact with all the SEEFORT board and faculty including the present EFORT President Professor Cannon and the past president and EFORT fellows godfather Professor Szendroi!!

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The Croatian Team organizers even provided for all fellows a tour guided sightseeing in Dubrovnik during the remaining afternoon after SEEFORT Closing ceremony that allowed us to know more about Dubrovnik region and European history!

Then we flight to Zagreb and started our "road trip" in the north of Croatia through our fantastic *Croatia Bus*!!

First stop was Osijek from April 26th until 27th where we visited the University Hospital Centre of Osijek with a warm welcome team in the name of Zoran Zelić. Besides lectures and discussion we went to the operating theatre to watch live surgeries with continuous interaction with all senior surgeons.

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In all the different cities we had an amazing special welcome, we keep always together and we had opportunity to also experience the best of Croatia: traditional food, customs, music, etc. And even visited and have lunch at an amazing ecological farm!

All this made us realize how is life in Croatia and also see how Croatian orthopaedic surgeons daily work!

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Then we went to Zagreb from April 27th until April 30th and we visited the Orthopaedic Departments of the University Hospital Centre, Clinical Hospital for Traumatology – University Hospital Sestre Milosrdnice and Children's University Hospital. All the lectures and discussions were particularly interesting and well organized and we thank all the speakers in the name of Domagoj Delimar, Aljoša Matejčić and Davor Bojić for all the extremely interesting presentations and discussions they organized locally specially for us and for the guided visit in each Hospital and allowed us to go inside the operating rooms and ward!

We also visited private clinics just outside Zagreb (within 30Km) like the Special Hospital for Orthopaedic Surgery Akromion at Krapinske Toplice and the Orthopaedic Specialty Hospital St. Catherine at Zabrok and we really thank to all the speakers there in the name of Professor Miroslav Hašpl and Professor Damir Hudetz, respectively, and for all the live surgeries we could watch in the operating rooms and through the continuous video assisted live transmission surgeries. They prepare such an organized visit including time for discussion and we could perfectly notice the differences between public hospitals and private ones!! It was really interesting and made us discuss several topics!

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We had also opportunity to sightseeing of Zagreb in between or just before dinners and Tomislav Čengić provide us all the cultural and historic information to make it even more special and enriching... afterwards it is our European history!!



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It was really a great opportunity to meet with colleagues from all over Europe. All fellows were very interested in exchanging experiences and knowledge and this was a fantastic unique and unforgettable possibility to connect with new friends and colleagues between the 13 fellows, team organizers and all speakers. We could up dated knowledge in all different subjects of Orthopaedics and Traumatology and we start future collaborations – maybe multicentre studies will be performed and for sure we will keep exchange experiences with case discussions and shared opinions between all group!

Conclusion:

The EFORT Spring Travelling Fellowship Croatia 2015 was an amazing and unforgettable experience!



I am much honored to have had the possibility to participate in this fellowship. Once again I would like to thank EFORT for the opportunity to participate in this Fellowship as well as SPOT and CrOS, and particularly to all the Croatian team organizers for making this so special and finally to my new fellows friends for making this week an unforgettable experience. I have no doubt that we all we keep sharing experiences and friendship across borders!

This Fellowship at Croatia was extremely well organized in terms of an interesting scientific programme, time for discussions, up dated speakers sharing their expertise experience, as well as a pleasant social and cultural programme! Croatian team organizers always promoted interaction and friendship and they never dismissed any detail and we felt such a special treatment (and cozy environment) in all cities and Hospitals we visited because they are truly fantastic hosts!!

All group was completed (and easily) integrated closely-knit and each of us shared and exchanged our national and personal experiences all the time!

Croatian team was able to establish a truly connection network between us all to keep in the future in a phase that all of us are finishing residency and have ambitions to growth as orthopaedics surgeons! It was an extremely enriching experience that I will never forget!

Thank you for this opportunity!! And congratulations for all the Croatian team organizers!! This was value of every effort to make it come true!

Everything was just perfect!!

Remains now the challenge to keep like this time in Croatia... I can tell it will be difficult to rich the same level for upcoming fellowships!

Maybe EFORT will repeat a fellowship in Croatia again in a few years!! For sure with guarantees of successes because they know how to combine science knowledge, up date discussions and establish social connections at the same time even given European local culture enrichments to complete it perfectly!

It was an extremely amazing experience!! The EFORT Spring Travelling Fellowship 2015 at Croatia established a connection network to keep in the future!

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I really want to specially thank the amazing Croatian Team Organizers: Professor Robert Kolundžić (CrOS President), Tomislav Čengiċ, Tadija Petroviċ, Hrvoje Klobučar, Stipe Corluka, Petra Jurina, and Stjepan Ćuriċ!

Because they all know the details count... and make all the difference!!! You all were brilliantly professionals during all fellowship! (Even with the challenge of the SEEFORT Meeting combination!)

After this fellowship I grew as an orthopaedic surgeon and as a person thanks to all of you!
Thank you very much!!

Vania Oliveira

Portugal