



A4L_ACTIONS

Alliance for Life Sciences: From Strategies to Actions in Central and Eastern Europe

H2020-SC1-2020-Single-Stage-RTD --964997

D3.5 Report on Early Stage Researchers' Retreats

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1 SUMMARY

Alliance4Life is an established network of progressive health research institutions in Central and East Europe (CEE) – an Alliance of successfully piloted good practice. The A4L_ACTIONS project's (No. 964997) main activities are focused not only on *Culture fostering excellence* (piloting peer-evaluation and assessment of institutional practice as a strategic management tool, professionalizing research administration); *Building recognition* (attracting advanced partners to support scientific ideas originating in CEE, initiating new international projects and collaborations with industry; communicating with stakeholders and policy makers) *Impact on innovation* (raising the competences of Technology Transfer specialists, creating industry relations platform linking academia and industry), but also on **Career policy nurturing talents**: training and networking next generation of leaders.

One of the type of the cross-institutional networking events that were dedicated to the Early stage researchers (ESR) was *ESR Retreats*, organized by three Alliance's partners: [Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis](#) (LIOS) from Latvia, [Vilnius University](#) (VU) from Lithuania and [School of Medicine - University of Zagreb](#) (UZSM) from Croatia. All ESR retreats in the project were planned as clustered with other project's events while minimizing travel: the first Ryga's (LV) event was planned together with the workshop for Technology Transfer (TT) professionals and Trigger event; there were also RMA Academy and Trigger event taking place in parallel in Vilnius (LT); TT workshop and Trigger event also were organized in parallel to the ESR Retreat in Zagreb (HR).

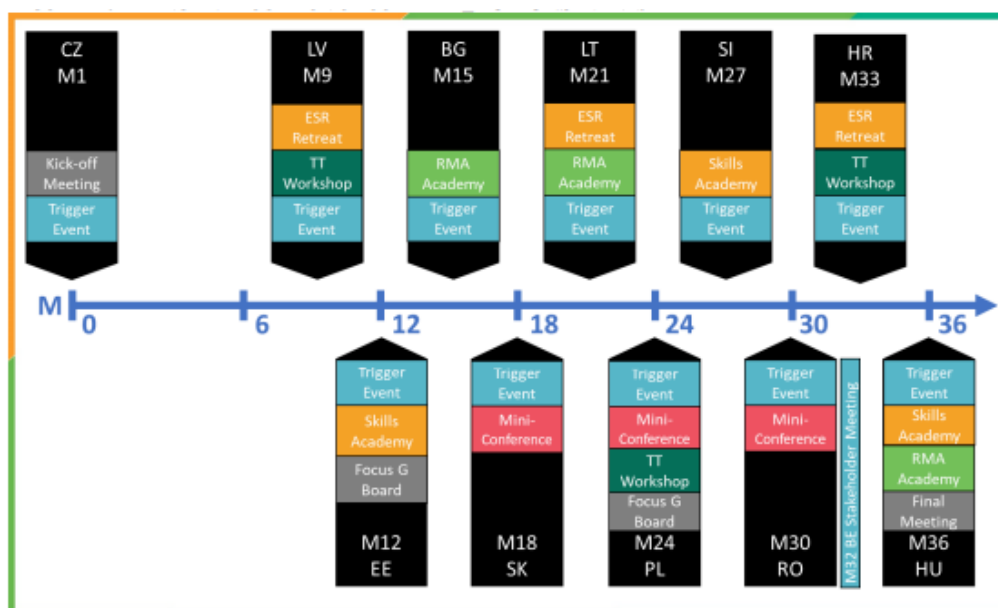


Figure 1. Timing and locations of A4L_Actions events

The ESR Retreats engaged more than 500 ESRs from across the CEE in the joint events involving scientific presentations, poster sessions, career talks and skills training sections. The retreats had integrated sessions such as transferable skills workshops, speakers from industry demonstrating intersectoral careers and promoting interdisciplinary exposure, interdisciplinarity through the broad thematic focus on Life Sciences, Research visibility. ESRs had also the chance to engage with experts and discuss the rapid advances in Artificial intelligence (AI) in recent years that have led to numerous creative applications in science.

2 A4L_ACTIONS ESR RETREATS – ORGANIZERS, FORMAT, DATES

The present report will summarize the three ESR Retreats of A4L_ACTIONS:

- The first event organized by [Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis](#) (LIOS), which due to the COVID-19 pandemic was held online on 20-21st of January, 2022
- The second event organized by [Vilnius University](#) (VU) on 23-24th of January, 2023. The first day - the presentations from the prominent researchers and representative of European Research Council – the event was live; second day – the posters sessions – hybrid.
- The third event organized by [School of Medicine - University of Zagreb](#) (UZSM), which was held live on 17-18th of January, 2024.

ESR Retreat Venue	Participants	Invited Speakers	Topics
Riga (ONLINE)	500	29	5
Vilnius			
Zagreb			

3 FIRST A4L_ACTIONS ESR RETREAT in 2022 (RYGA'S EVENT)

Key information	
Institution: Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (LIOS)	Name(s) of organizer(s): Maija Dambrova, Osvalds Pugovics
Event name and format: ESR retreat, online	Dates: January 20-21, 2022.
Platform: Youtube, Zoom	<p>Number of participants: registered - 800; connected – 500.</p> <p>Presenters (20th of January):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Life after PhD</i> (Radan Spaventi; Alison Campbell; Giedrius Gasiūnas; Peeter Padrik) – 4; • <i>Pitches of Industry to ESRs</i> (Diana Ratkevica; Andis Slaitas; Stephan Goldenbaum; Imants Zudans; Thomas Evangelidis; Raimonds Terentjevs; Vitalijs Skrivelis; Ales Sima) – 8; • <i>Pitches of Alliance4Life's Members to Industry and ESRs</i> (Zlatuše Novotná; Daniela Tršová; Osvalds Pugovics; Michal Janota; Silvia Pastoreková; Maria Cichalewska-Studzińska; Sinisa Skokic; Simon Botond; Ramūnas Grigonis; Robert Zorec; Margus Leppik; Stefan Busnatu) – 12. <p>Presenters (21st of January):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trends & Traps of Communicating Research</i> (Juliana Ceausu; Ester Jarour; Srećko Gajović) – 3; • <i>Funding Opportunities for ESRs</i> (Jakub Zeman; Raimonda

	<p>Markevičienė) – 2.</p> <p>Moderators: Ester Jarour; Srećko Gajović</p>
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3.1 PROGRAMME OF RYGA EVENT



Alliance4Life

PROGRAMME

ALLIANCE4LIFE_ACTIONS

20-21 January 2022, online (Riga event)

LV
M9

ESR
Retreat

TT
Workshop

Trigger
Event

Thursday, January 20, 2022	
Time	Programme
8:30-9:00	Connecting to online space
9:00-10:00	Connecting to online space
10:00-12:00	<p>Workshop for Technology Transfer Professionals <i>(Internal training for FG6 members and invited participants)</i></p> <p>Bernard Denis, ASTP https://www.astp4kt.eu/about-us/committees/professional-development-committee/bernard-denis/</p> <p>Laura Spinardi, ASTP https://www.astp4kt.eu/about-us/committees/professional-development-committee/laura-spinardi/</p> <p>Early Stage Researchers' Retreat: Life after PhD <i>(open event for PhD students and postdocs in Life Sciences)</i></p> <p>Radan Spaventi, Prof., UZSM and Triadelta Partners Ltd. https://www.linkedin.com/in/radan-spaventi-481b803/?originalSubdomain=hr</p> <p>Alison Campbell, OBE, Director, Knowledge Transfer Ireland & Past Chair AUTM https://www.linkedin.com/in/alisonfcampbell/?originalSubdomain=ie</p> <p>Giedrius Gasiūnas, PhD, Co-founder and CSO at <i>CasZyme</i> & Senior researcher at <i>Vilnius University</i></p> <p>Peeter Padrik, MD, PhD, Founder and CEO of Antegenes & Oncologist https://antegenes.com/about-us/</p> <p>Moderated by Ester Jarour (MU)</p>
12:00-13:00	Lunch break
13:00-15:00	<p>Workshop for Technology Transfer Professionals <i>(Internal training continuation)</i></p> <p>Early Stage Researchers' Retreat: Pitches of Industry to ESRs <i>(short presentations of industrial partners for PhD students and postdocs in Life Sciences)</i></p>

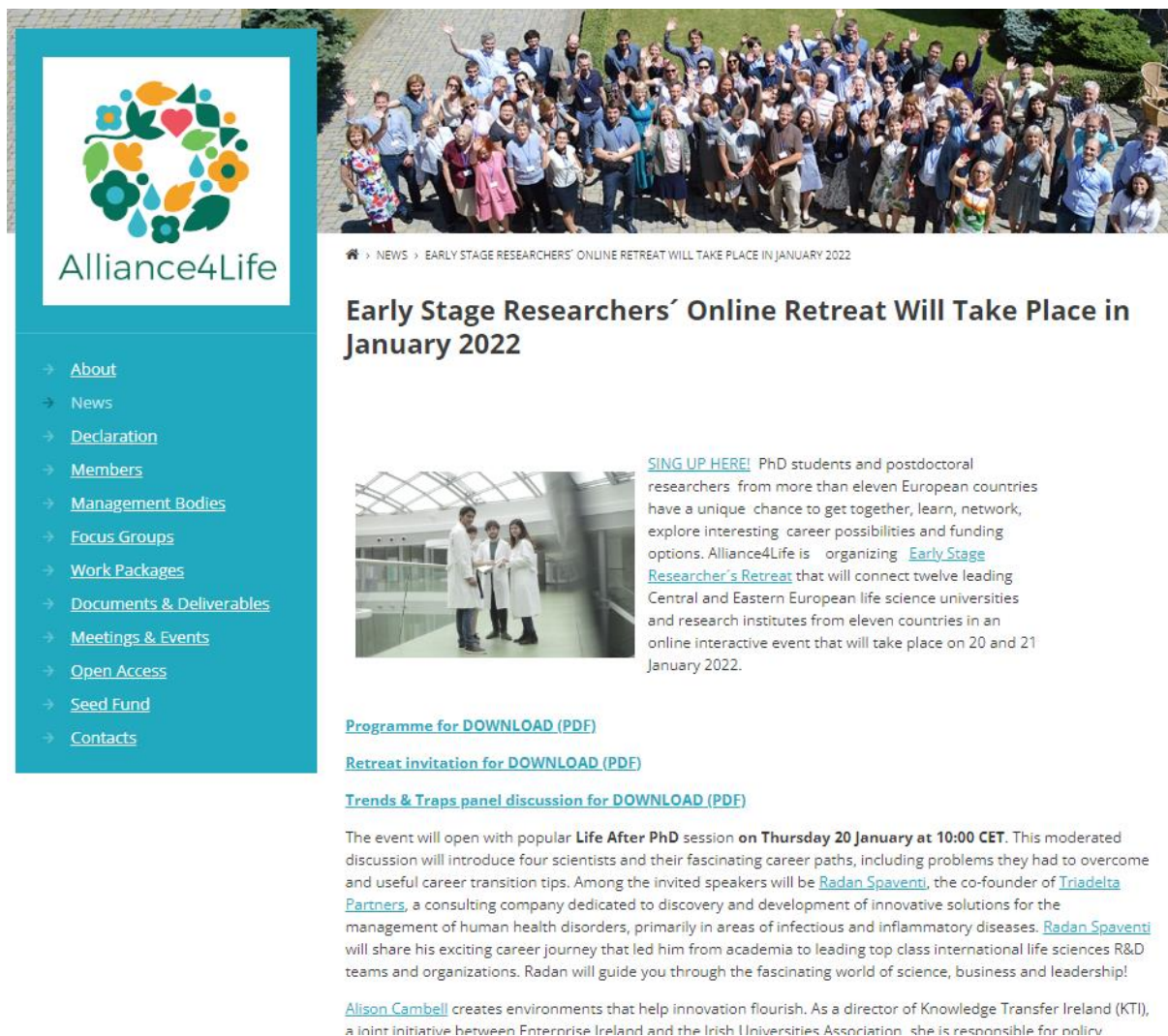
		<p>Diana Ratkevica, PhD, Head of Research and Development, JSC Grindeks, https://grindeks.eu/</p> <p>Andis Slaitas, PhD, CEO, Latvia MGI Tech, https://en.mgi-tech.com/</p> <p>Stephan Goldenbaum, MSc, CEO, Solis BioDyne, https://solisbiodyne.com/</p> <p>Imants Zudans, PhD, CEO, MolPort LLC, https://www.molport.com/</p> <p>Thomas Evangelidis, PhD, CEO&CSO, Aiffinity, https://www.aiffinity.com/</p> <p>Raimonds Terentjevs, PhD, Member of the Board, JSC Olainfarm, https://lv.olainfarm.com/</p> <p>Vitalijs Skrivelis, PhD, Owner, PharmIdea LLC, http://www.pharmidea.lv/</p> <p>Ales Sima, PhD, Head of Business Development, oncomed manufacturing a.s., https://www.oncomed.cz/</p>
15:15-15:30	Coffee break	
15:30-16:30	<p>Pitches of Alliance4Life´s Members to Industry and ESRs <i>("Trigger event" – short presentations of technologies and services of core facilities presented by technology transfer professionals and/or core facilities managers)</i></p> <p>Zlataše Novotná, MVDr, Alliance4Life Coordinator</p> <p>Daniela Tršová, PhD, Business Development Manager, Central European Institute of Technology – Masaryk University (CEITEC MU)</p> <p>Osvalds Pugovics, PhD, Director, Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis (LIOS)</p> <p>Michal Janota, MSc, Chief Operations Officer, St. Anne's University Hospital Brno (ICRC)</p> <p>Silvia Pastoreková, prof., PhD, Director, Biomedical Research Center of the Slovak Academy of Science (BMC SAS)</p> <p>Maria Cichalewska-Studzińska, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher, Medical University of Lodz (MUL)</p> <p>Sinisa Skokic, PhD, Laboratory for Regenerative Neuroscience, University of Zagreb School of Medicine (UZSM)</p> <p>Simon Botond, PhD, Department of Conservative Dentistry, Faculty of Dentistry & Károly Rácz Doctoral School of Clinical Medicine Semmelweis University (SU)</p> <p>Ramunas Grigonis, PhD, Innovation Manager, Vilnius University (VU)</p> <p>Robert Zorec, prof., PhD, Institute of Pathophysiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ljubljana (UL)</p> <p>Margus Leppik, PhD, Vice Director of Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, University of Tartu (UT)</p> <p>Stefan Busnatu, MD, PhD, Senior Lecturer in Cardiology- University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila", Vice Dean of Faculty of Medicine, Head of the Innovation and e-Health Center</p>	
16:30-17:00	Closing the 1st day programme	

Friday, January 21, 2022	
Time	Programme
8:30-9:00	Connecting to online space
9:00-10:15	<p>Workshop for Technology Transfer Professionals (Internal training continuation)</p> <p>Early Stage Researchers' Retreat: (Open event for PhD students and postdocs in Life Sciences)</p> <p>Trends and Traps when Communicating Research Results (Moderated panel discussion)</p> <p>Juliana Ceausu (UMFCD) Ester Jarour (MU) Srečko Gajović (UZSM)</p> <p>Moderated by Srečko Gajović (UZSM)</p>
10:15-10:45	Coffee break
10:45-12:00	<p>Workshop for Technology Transfer Professionals (Internal training continuation)</p> <p>Early Stage Researchers' Retreat: (open event for PhD students and postdocs in Life Sciences)</p> <p>Funding Opportunities for ESRs (MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, MSCA Staff Exchanges; ERASMUS+ programme)</p> <p>Jakub Zeman (MU) on MSCA https://www.linkedin.com/in/jakub-zeman-59733719/</p> <p>Raimonda Markevičienė (VU) on ERASMUS+ https://www.linkedin.com/in/raimonda-markeviciene/</p>
12:00-13:00	Lunch break
13:00-15:00	Workshop for Technology Transfer Professionals (Internal training continuation)
15:00-15:30	Closing the 2nd day programme



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3.2 PRESS RELEASE



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NEWS > EARLY STAGE RESEARCHERS' ONLINE RETREAT WILL TAKE PLACE IN JANUARY 2022

Early Stage Researchers' Online Retreat Will Take Place in January 2022

SING UP HERE! PhD students and postdoctoral researchers from more than eleven European countries have a unique chance to get together, learn, network, explore interesting career possibilities and funding options. Alliance4Life is organizing [Early Stage Researcher's Retreat](#) that will connect twelve leading Central and Eastern European life science universities and research institutes from eleven countries in an online interactive event that will take place on 20 and 21 January 2022.

Programme for [DOWNLOAD \(PDF\)](#)

Retreat invitation for [DOWNLOAD \(PDF\)](#)

Trends & Traps panel discussion for [DOWNLOAD \(PDF\)](#)

The event will open with popular **Life After PhD** session **on Thursday 20 January at 10:00 CET**. This moderated discussion will introduce four scientists and their fascinating career paths, including problems they had to overcome and useful career transition tips. Among the invited speakers will be [Radan Spaventi](#), the co-founder of [Triadelta Partners](#), a consulting company dedicated to discovery and development of innovative solutions for the management of human health disorders, primarily in areas of infectious and inflammatory diseases. [Radan Spaventi](#) will share his exciting career journey that led him from academia to leading top class international life sciences R&D teams and organizations. Radan will guide you through the fascinating world of science, business and leadership!

[Alison Cambell](#) creates environments that help innovation flourish. As a director of Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI), a joint initiative between Enterprise Ireland and the Irish Universities Association, she is responsible for policy

Figure 2. Information disseminated on the project website



Early Stage Researchers' Online Retreat 20 and 21 January 2022

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be [Radan Spaventi](#), the co-founder of [Triadelta Partners](#), a consulting company dedicated to discovery and development of innovative solutions for the management of human health disorders, primarily in areas of infectious and inflammatory diseases. [Radan Spaventi](#) will share his exciting career journey that led him from academia to leading top class international life sciences R&D teams and organizations. Radan will guide you through the fascinating world of science, business and leadership!

[Alison Cambell](#) creates environments that help innovation flourish. As a director of Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI), a joint initiative between Enterprise Ireland and the Irish Universities Association, she is responsible for policy, practice and the performance of the Irish knowledge-technology transfer (KTT) system. She will share her experience with working across start-ups, strategic alliances, funding agencies, policy and strategic roles on leadership boards. As a believer in the power of shared learning she will provide you with useful tips how make things happen and how to steer you career in science into the desired direction. Alison will introduce you to the world of knowledge transfer and innovation!

Giedrius Gasiunas is a senior researcher at the Institute of Biotechnology of Life Sciences Centre at the Vilnius University and founder and CSO of the biotechnology company [CasZyme](#). CasZyme aims to deliver novel solutions in the field of CRISPR based molecular tools. Giedrius will share his experience in developing and characterizing new tools in support of CRISPR-Cas gene editing technology research and describe his career journey from his PhD degree in biochemistry to his own successful biotechnology start-up. Giedrius will take you on a journey through the world of scientific inventions and entrepreneurship!

The last speaker of the Life After PhD session will be Peeter Padrik, a founder and CEO of [Antegenes](#). Peeter Padrik is one of the leading cancer specialists in Estonia with more than 25 years of experience as a clinician, researcher, leader, and healthcare manager at Tartu University Hospital. Peeter Padrik is one of the pioneers in the implementation of innovative genetic information into healthcare. He has developed novel polygenic risk score based genetic tests to estimate the risk of common cancers that makes it possible to calculate a person's risk of developing cancer and provide medical advice on prevention and early detection. His spin-off company just received an investment of 500,000 euros to bring the genetic tests for cancer prevention to UK market. Peeter will guide you through his admirable career journey of a medical doctor, researcher and spin-off founder.

In the **afternoon at 13:00 CET**, the researchers will have a chance to listen to **15-minute long elevator pitches** introducing variety of interesting **biotechnology companies** with possible **career options for PhD graduates** from the life science sector. The day will close with **technology pitches** of participating Alliance4Life partner institutions starting **at 15:30 CET**, who will introduce their **core facilities, expertise and technology equipment**. This final session might be interesting especially for students who would like to continue as postdoctoral researchers in academia and are seeking suitable technology and expertise, that will help them to advance with their research.

The **second day on Friday 21 January** will be all about learning! The morning session **at 9:00 CET** will introduce **trends and traps when communicating research results**. You will learn how a professional approach in creating research results and communicating them in scientific publications as well as in the media can help your research and your career. The session will comprise of short presentations of the panelists followed by a joint discussion with the audience. The following session **at 10:45 CET** will introduce variety of **funding opportunities for Early Stage Researchers** and solid strategies that will help you to secure the desired funding. You will explore prestigious MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, MSCA Staff Exchanges, as well as ERASMUS+ programme. Don't hesitate and sign up for this [FREE EARLY STAGE RESEARCHERS RETREAT](#) by Alliance4Life!

3.3 RECORDINGS AND LINKS

Recordings are available using this link or direct links below: <https://alliance4life.ceitec.cz/meetings-events-alliance4life-action/>

Organizers' contacts: maiya.dambrova@farm.osi.lv ; osvalds@osi.lv



Early Stage Researchers Retreat: Life After PhD

20. January 2022

Moderated discussion with four guests who shared valuable insights from their fascinating career paths, including problems they had to overcome and useful career transition tips. Among the invited speakers were Radan Spaventi, Alison Campbell, Giedrius Gasiunas and Peeter Padrik. .

Read more about the event [HERE](#).

<https://youtu.be/fHbReBeQtjQ>



Early Stage Researchers Retreat: Pitches of Industry to ESRs

20. January 2022

This session presents future career options to ESRs and and connects Alliance4Life's members with the industry. A variety of biotechnology companies introduced their work in short elevator pitches including possible career options for PhD graduates from the life science sector.

Read more about the event [HERE](#).

<https://youtu.be/u2wKONMotYg>



Early Stage Researchers Retreat: Pitches Alliance4Life Partners to Industry

20. January 2022

Technology pitches of participating Alliance4Life partner institutions, who presented their core facilities, expertise and technology equipment.

Read more about the event [HERE](#).

<https://youtu.be/yYqXtzKrq28>



Early Stage Researchers Retreat: Trends and Traps of Communication Research

21 January 2022

This session introduced trends and traps when conducting research and communicating research results and addressed important issues such as ethics in research and medical professions. It highlighted the need for increased research rigor and need for science communication.

Read more about the event [HERE](#).

<https://youtu.be/PmAhbv0HYd4>

4 SECOND A4L_ACTIONS ESR RETREAT in 2023 (VILNIUS EVENT)



Key information	
Institution: Vilnius University	Name(s) of organizer(s): Anzelma Ūselienė, Vaida Garmuvienė
Event name and format: ESR retreat - live; poster session - hybrid	Dates: January 23-24, 2023
Place: VU Library Scholarly Communication and Information centre, Saulėtekio av. 5, 10222 Vilnius	<p><i>Number of participants: 22 (1 online)</i></p> <p><i>Lecturers on 23th of January:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Heart regeneration: challenges and opportunities- Darius Balčiūnas</i> • <i>Chrono-epigenomics of human disease - Arturas Petronis</i> • <i>Grantsmanship: the art of persuasion that pays - Jonas Bunikis (online)</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Interactive game „Publishing trap“ - Eglė Juodė (two sessions both days)</i> <p>Moderators of three posters sessions on 24th of January, 2023: Egidijus Šimoliūnas, Simonas Juzėnas, Raimonda Kubiliūtė, Greta Burneikaitė, Rytis Masiliūnas.</p>
Poster session (24th of January)	<p>The poster sessions were hybrid (since 1 ESR was participating online), the posters will be presented in e-format: the participants had to prepare short presentations (3-5 slides for the 5-minutes presentations each). There were 3 sessions, the presentations will be categorized by the moderators and the list was provided before the event. The sessions were moderated and after each poster session there was the discussions.</p> <p>The participants were obligated to upload the brief abstracts of their presentation for poster session to the dedicated platform till January 3, 2023 and to send the presentations to the organizers of the event till January 10, 2023. The selected moderators from VU Faculty of Medicine and VU Life Sciences Center categorized them in to three groups and prepared their questions for the sessions and the preliminary feedback for the discussions after every poster session.</p> <p>Topics varied from enzyme engineering, genome sequencing, nanoparticles, epigenetics and treatment of Alzheimer's and heart diseases.</p>
Interactive game „Publishing trap“	<p>The young scientists also participated in an interactive board game called “Publishing trap”, organized by the Vilnius University Library. This game allowed them to explore the impact of scholarly communications choices and the role of open access in research.</p>

4.1 PROGRAMME OF VILNIUS EVENT



PROGRAMME ALLIANCE4LIFE_ACTIONS

Early Stage Researchers' Retreat
23-24 January 2023 (Vilnius event)

Monday, January 23, 2023

Time	Draft Programme	
8:30-9:00	Registration (Scientific Communication and Information Center, near Conference Hall)	
9:00-10:30	<p>Official opening</p> <p>Dr. Darius Balčiūnas „Heart regeneration: challenges and opportunities“</p> <p><i>Ass. Prof., Department of Biology, Temple University, Philadelphia;</i> <i>Senior Researcher, Institute of Biotechnology, Life Sciences Center, Vilnius University</i></p>	Scientific Communication and Information Center (SCIC), Conference Hall
10:30-11:00	Coffee break	
11:00-12:00	<p>Prof. Arturas Petronis “Chrono-epigenomics of human disease”</p> <p><i>Senior Scientist and Head, Krembil Family Epigenetics Laboratory, Campbell Family Mental Health Research Institute CAMH</i> <i>Senior Researcher, Institute of Biotechnology, Life Sciences Center, Vilnius University</i></p>	SCIC, Conference Hall
12:00-13:00	Lunch break	
13:00-14:45	<p>Dr. Jonas Bunikis (<i>online</i>)</p> <p>"Grantsmanship: the art of persuasion that pays"</p> <p><i>Research Programme Officer in Life Sciences at the European Research Council (ERC)</i></p>	SCIC, Conference Hall

14:45-15:00	Coffee break	
15:00-17:00	Interactive game “Publishing trap” – 1st group https://copyrightliteracy.org/resources/the-publishing-trap/	SCIC, A310 seminar room
	Social programme (guided city tour by bus) – 11nd group	Old town
17:00-17:30	Closing the 1st day programme	
19:00-20:30	Dinner (Hilton Garden Inn, Gedimino av. 44B, Vilnius)	Old town

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Time	Draft Programme	
8:30-9:00	Registration (Scientific Communication and Information Center, near Conference Hall)	
9:00-10:30	Poster session I	SCIC, Conference hall
10:30-11:00	Coffee break	
11:00-12:30	Poster session II	SCIC, Conference hall
12:30-13:30	Lunch break	
13:30-14:45	Poster session III	SCIC, Conference hall
14:45-15:00	Coffee break	
15:00-17:00	Interactive game “Publishing trap” – 11nd group https://copyrightliteracy.org/resources/the-publishing-trap/	SCIC, A310 seminar room
	Social programme (guided city tour by bus) – 1st group	Old town
17:00-17:30	Closing the 1st day programme	



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4.2 PRESS RELEASES




NEWS > NATIONAL TRIGGER EVENT, EARLY STAGE RESEARCHERS' RETREAT AND RMA ACADEMY WILL BE HELD IN VILNIUS

National Trigger Event, Early Stage Researchers' Retreat and RMA Academy will be held in Vilnius

This January Vilnius University will become a place for professionals from Life Sciences field to gather together.

On 24 January Alliance4Life trigger event titled **Research assessment reform: What to expect and how will it affect us** will take place at Vilnius University. This event will gather professionals not only from Alliance4Life member institutions but also guests from the European University Association, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in Lithuania, the Research Council of Lithuania and many others.

On 23-24 January, **Early Stage Researchers Retreat** will gather PhD students and postdocs from Alliance4Life partner institutions for a joint retreat full of learning and knowledge sharing in Vilnius. Researchers will have to present their research results, hold poster sessions and receive feedback and guidance from senior researchers regarding their scientific work and achieved results. The young scientists will also participate in an interactive board game called **Publishing trap**. This game allows participants to explore the impact of scholarly communications choices and the role of open access in research.

On 22-25 January, **Research Management and Administration (RMA) Academy** will be held at Vilnius University to expand knowledge about science and business cooperation, grant writing, management of research projects using online tools and other important topics.

More information:

- [Program of Early Stage Researchers' Retreat](#)
- [Program of Research Management and Administration \(RMA\) Academy](#)
- [Program of "Alliance4Life" trigger event "Research assessment reform: What to expect and how will it affect us?"](#)

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NEWS > LIFE SCIENCES PROFESSIONALS GATHERED IN VILNIUS

Life sciences professionals gathered in Vilnius

On 23-24 January, the **Early Stage Researchers Retreat** brought together PhD students and postdocs from "Alliance4Life" partner institutions to Vilnius University for a joint retreat full of learning and knowledge sharing. Scientific presentations, poster sessions, career talks and skills training sections were part of the programme. Dr Darius Balčiūnas (Ass. Prof. at the Department of Biology at Temple University and Senior Researcher at Life Sciences Center, Vilnius University) presented his research work in the heart regeneration field. ESR retreat participants also listened to Prof. Artūras Petronis (Senior Scientist and Head of Krembil Family Epigenetics Laboratory at Campbell Family Mental Health Research Institute and Senior Researcher at Life Sciences Center, Vilnius University) presentation about chrono-epigenomics of human disease and Dr Jonas Bunikis' (Research Programme Officer in Life Sciences at the European Research Council) presentation about grantsmanship and the art of persuasion that pays.

More than 20 PhD students and postdocs presented their work during the poster sessions. Topics varied from enzyme engineering, genome sequencing, nanoparticles, epigenetics and treatment of Alzheimer's and heart diseases. The young scientists also participated in an interactive board game called "**Publishing trap**", organized by the Vilnius University Library. This game allowed them to explore the impact of scholarly communications choices and the role of open access in research.

On the 23rd of January, **Research Management and Administration (RMA) Academy** started at Vilnius University. Participants from the Alliance4Life partner institutions shared their experiences and expanded their knowledge in research management. In three days all five grant management modules (grant proposal, academia-business cooperation establishment, working with the research teams, budgeting and proposal evaluation, and management of research project using online tools) have been completed. Trained by Jakub Zeman and Ladislav Čoček (Masaryk University), Dr Magdalena Wrzesinska and Dr Karolina H. Czarneska-Chrebelska (Medical University of Lodz) the participants of RMA academy are ready to share the newly acquired knowledge and skills within their home institutions.

On the 24th of January Alliance4Life national trigger event titled **Research assessment reform: What to expect and how will it affect us** took place at Vilnius University. This event gathered professionals not only from

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Figure 3. Information disseminated on the project website



National Trigger Event, Early Stage Researchers' Retreat and RMA Academy will be held in Vilnius
22-25 of January 2023

This January Vilnius University will become a place for professionals from Life Sciences field to gather together.

On 24 January Alliance4Life trigger event titled **Research assessment reform: What to expect and how will it affect us** will take place at Vilnius University. This event will gather professionals not only from Alliance4Life member institutions but also guests from the European University Association, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in Lithuania, the Research Council of Lithuania and many others.

On 23-24 January, **Early Stage Researchers Retreat** will gather PhD students and postdocs from Alliance4Life partner institutions for a joint retreat full of learning and knowledge sharing in Vilnius. Researchers will have to present their research results, hold poster sessions and receive feedback and guidance from senior researchers regarding their scientific work and achieved results. The young scientists will also participate in an interactive board game called **Publishing trap**. This game allows participants to explore the impact of scholarly communications choices and the role of open access in research.

On 22-25 January, **Research Management and Administration (RMA) Academy** will be held at Vilnius University to expand knowledge about science and business cooperation, grant writing, management of research projects using online tools and other important topics.

More information:

[Program of Early Stage Researchers' Retreat](#)

[Program of Research Management and Administration \(RMA\) Academy](#)

[Program of "Alliance4life" trigger event "Research assessment reform: What to expect and how will it affect us?"](#)



Life sciences professionals gathered in Vilnius
22-25 of January 2023

On 23-24 January, the **Early Stage Researchers Retreat** brought together PhD students and postdocs from "Alliance4Life" partner institutions to Vilnius University for a joint retreat full of learning and knowledge sharing. Scientific presentations, poster sessions, career talks and skills training sections were part of the programme. Dr Darius Balčiūnas (*Ass. Prof. at the Department of Biology at Temple University and Senior Researcher at Life Sciences Center, Vilnius University*) presented his research work in the heart regeneration field. ESR retreat participants also listened to Prof. Artūras Petronis (*Senior Scientist and Head of Krembil Family Epigenetics Laboratory at Campbell Family Mental Health Research Institute and Senior Researcher at Life Sciences Center, Vilnius University*) presentation about chronoepigonomics of human disease and Dr Jonas Bunikis' (*Research Programme Officer in Life*

Sciences at the European Research Council) presentation about grantsmanship and the art of persuasion that pays.

More than 20 PhD students and postdocs presented their work during the poster sessions. Topics varied from enzyme engineering, genome sequencing, nanoparticles, epigenetics and treatment of Alzheimer's and heart diseases. The young scientists also participated in an interactive board game called "*Publishing trap*", organized by the Vilnius University Library. This game allowed them to explore the impact of scholarly communications choices and the role of open access in research.

On the 23rd of January, **Research Management and Administration (RMA) Academy** started at Vilnius University. Participants from the Alliance4Life partner institutions shared their experiences and expanded their knowledge in research management. In three days all five grant management modules (grant proposal, academia-business cooperation establishment, working with the research teams, budgeting and proposal evaluation, and management of research project using online tools) have been completed. Trained by Jakub Zeman and Ladislav Čoček (Masaryk University), Dr Magdalena Wrzesinska and Dr Karolina H.Czarneska-Chrebelska (Medical University of Lodz) the participants of RMA academy are ready to share the newly acquired knowledge and skills within their home institutions.

On the 24th of January Alliance4Life national trigger event titled **Research assessment reform: What to expect and how will it affect us** took place at Vilnius University. This event gathered professionals not only from Alliance4Life member institutions but also guests from the European University Association, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Lithuania, the Research Council of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers.

The national trigger event was opened by the Vice-rector and Pro-rector for Research prof. Edita Sužiedėlienė from the Vilnius University. The first key note speech was presented by the Director of Research and Innovation of the European University Association (EUA) Stephane Berghmans and addressed the newly signed agreement on the next steps of Research Assessment Reform. In his speech, he presented EUA's development and results of the survey on Open Science. He also emphasized key factors for change in research assessment and the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). S. Berghmans highlighted that it is crucial for universities to be actively involved in the reform of the research assessment and they should make an informed decision regarding this process. Also, a substantial number of universities joining the coalition is needed to guarantee that the sector's interests are taken into account during the reform process.

Head of the Division of Science in the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport Tadas Juknevičius presented the history of the research assessment in Lithuania. With the start of the qualitative evaluation in 1995, Lithuania's research evaluation system was designed by quantitative evaluation until 2010. In 2023 a new system of individual researchers' evaluation was introduced and in 2024 qualitative assessment part in institutional R&D funding will increase up to 70%.

Dr Eugenijus Stumbrys, Head of Research and Higher Education Policy Analysis Unit of the Research Council of Lithuania, presented a review and development of research assessment criteria in Lithuania. He emphasized that in 2021 amendments to the law and other legal acts were made, and lessons from previous evaluations were considered. Consequently,

more units of assessment groups and larger expert panels were formed, only key evidence is requested, and the appeal procedure is introduced.

Dr Artiom Magomedov from the Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers invited everyone to discuss the quality versus quantity criteria of scientific research. He highlighted that today's research assessment demands concerning both - quantity and quality, often contradict each other. Therefore, universities may change direction from quantity, and more strongly reward research quality.

The next Alliance4Life meeting will take place on the 24-26th of April in Lodz (Poland) with board meeting and focus group meetings, a national trigger event and mini-conference on the program. More information coming soon!

4.3 PHOTOS OF THE EVENT












5 THIRD A4L_ACTIONS ESR RETREAT in 2024 (ZAGREB EVENT)



Key information	
Institution: School of Medicine - University of Zagreb (UZSM)	Name(s) of organizer(s): Lozika Mašić, Nada Cikes
Event name and format: ESR Retreat - live	Dates: January 17-18, 2024
Place: UZSM, Šalata 3, Zagreb; Hall Šercer	<p>Number of participants: 32</p> <p>The topics of the third ESR Retreat: <i>AI in Science & Research Visibility</i></p> <p>Lecturers on 17th of January: Goran Šimić, Filip Lončarić, Jan Homolak, Anja Barešić, Matija Piškorec, Lea Škorić, Dina Vrkić</p> <p>Lecturers on 18th of January: Tomislav Strgar, Lea Škorić & Dina Vrkić, Željka Krsnik.</p> <p>Topics: Can AI Be Conscious?, Artificial Intelligence in Cardiac Imaging – Improving the Clinical Workflow, Patient Phenotyping and Outcome Prediction, A Stands for Alliance, A Stands for AI: A Heads-Up for Aspiring Scientists, Introduction to AI for Early Stage Researchers, Introduction to Data Science and Data Governance in Science, How to Choose the Right Journal for Your Paper, Researchers IDs and Profiles: Increasing Your Research Visibility and Open Science in Interconnected World. Also, one industrial representative, TIS Group, presented their latest AI solution, SENDD - System for Early Neurological Deviation Detection.</p>

5.1 PROGRAMME OF ZAGREB EVENT





IIIrd Early Stage Researchers' Retreat – in Croatia

Early Stage Researchers' Retreat AI in Science & Research Visibility

17 – 18 January 2024
University of Zagreb School of Medicine (UZSM), Šalata 3, Zagreb
Hall Šercer

Wednesday, 17 January 2024		Thursday, 18 January 2024	
8:30 – 9:00	Arrivals / Registration	8:30 – 9:00	Arrivals / Registration
9:00 – 9:30	Can AI Be Conscious? <i>Goran Šimić, UZSM</i>	9:00 – 10:00	Introducing AI Solution SENDD - System for Early Neurological Deviation Detection <i>Tomislav Strgar, TIS Group Ltd.</i>
9:30 – 10:00	Artificial Intelligence in Cardiac Imaging – Improving the Clinical Workflow, Patient Phenotyping and Outcome Prediction <i>Filip Lončarić, University Hospital Centre Zagreb</i>	10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break
10:00 – 10:30	A Stands for Alliance, A Stands for AI: A Heads-Up for Aspiring Scientists <i>Jan Homolák, UZSM</i>	10:30 – 11:30	Researchers IDs and Profiles: Increasing Your Research Visibility <i>Lea Škorić & Dina Vrkić, UZSM</i>
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break	11:30 – 12:30	Open Science in Interconnected World <i>Željka Krsnik, UZSM</i>
11:00 – 12:15	Introduction to AI for Early Stage Researchers <i>Anja Barešić & Matija Piškorec, Ruđer Bošković Institute</i>	12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
12:15 – 13:15	Lunch		
13:15 – 14:45	Introduction to Data Science and Data Governance in Science <i>Anja Barešić, Ruđer Bošković Institute</i>		
14:45 – 15:15	Coffee break		
15:15 – 16:30	How to Choose the Right Journal for Your Paper <i>Lea Škorić & Dina Vrkić, UZSM</i>		

5.2 PRESS RELEASE



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NEWS > TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER WORKSHOP, EARLY STAGE RESEARCHERS' RETREAT AND TRIGGER EVENT ORGANIZED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Technology Transfer Workshop, Early Stage Researchers' Retreat and trigger event organized at the University of Zagreb School of Medicine

The Alliance4Life aims to increase the local and regional impact of Health Research and Innovation in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). To achieve this, one of the goals was to develop and conduct training workshops for the Knowledge and technology transfer (KTO) professionals of the A4L_ACTIONS Consortium member institutions. Due to the fact that ASTP (Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals), the associated partner of A4L_ACTIONS, is the premier association of Knowledge Transfer professionals in Europe and concentrates the expertise and competence on knowledge and technology transfer, FG6 members agreed that a detailed program for each training event should be developed in close collaboration with ASTP. The programme aims to equip A4L professionals with the relevant knowledge and expertise to facilitate the exploitation of health research results.

Programmes for three workshops were developed, and the last **Technology Transfer Workshop on IP Valuation**, was organized at the University of Zagreb School of Medicine on 17 and 18 January 2024. The trainers presented different aspects of the topic including: the underlying sources of value in novel technologies, pathways to impact, licensing – benefits, structure and royalties, negotiating collaboration agreements, bootstrapping new ventures, equity valuation methods- later stage technologies, equity valuation - early-stage technologies, the human element – equity as 'fairness'.

On 17 and 18 January, the **Early Stage Researchers Retreat** brought together more than 30 Ph.D. students and postdocs from A4L partner institutions to the University of Zagreb School of Medicine for a joint retreat full of learning and knowledge sharing. The topic of the third ESR was **AI in Science & Research Visibility**. The rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) in recent years have led to numerous creative applications in science. Accelerating the productivity of science could be the most economically and socially valuable of all the uses of AI. Utilising AI to accelerate scientific productivity will support the ability of countries to grow, innovate and meet global challenges, from climate change to new contagions. Young researchers were introduced to the world of AI in Science at this ESR. They had the chance to engage with experts and discuss the fusion of AI and scientific

Figure 4. Information disseminated on the project website



Technology Transfer Workshop, Early Stage Researchers' Retreat and trigger event organized at the University of Zagreb School of Medicine 17-18 of January 2024

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On 19 January, a **trigger event** was organized on **How to Become a Good Innovator in Croatia?** The trigger event was opened by welcoming words of professor Božo Krušlin, leader of A4L_ACTIONS for UZSM and Vice Dean for Science. A respected researcher from Croatia, academician Slobodan Vukičević, presented important data on a novel biocompatible therapeutic solution for bone regeneration and talked about the importance of intellectual property protection. Very well-known neurosurgeon and researcher, associate professor Darko Chudy is specialized in deep brain stimulation operations, which restore consciousness to patients who have experienced severe brain trauma, ischemia, cardiac arrest, or who cannot wake up from a coma because they are in a so-called vegetative state or a state of minimal consciousness. He also presented robot RONNA, an advanced technological system for the most sensitive neurosurgical operations, which he developed with the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture. Research and innovation opportunities in Croatia were presented by professor Ozren Polašek (Croatian Science Foundation), Bruno Radojica (Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development) and Doris Jozić (Ministry of Science and Education). After the presentations, a panel discussion

followed in which, besides the speakers, participated David Smith (Ruđer Bošković Institute), Vesna Gabelica-Marković (University of Zagreb) and Vlatka Petrović (University of Zagreb).

Due to extreme weather conditions, two panellists and some of registered participants did not attend the trigger event. In spite of that, the discussion was very vivid and fruitful. Panellists emphasized the importance of offices for technology transfer and innovations, administrative support to innovators, the need to promote research & innovation to students, and the personal drive of innovators. Panel discussion revealed obstacles that may be responsible for unsatisfactory results of research & innovation in Croatia judged by the European Innovation Scoreboard and by the number of patents. These included a relatively small number of scientists in Croatia, compared to more successful EU member states, such as Sweden, Germany, Slovenia, or the Czech Republic. The Croatian Science Foundation has been identified as a key funding agency that should finance researchers in Croatia's public sector. In spite of the advances in national research funding in past years, including EU funds, the annual budget of the Croatian Science Foundation remains significantly smaller than that in successful EU states in research & innovation, such as Slovenia. The discussion revealed the need to improve research infrastructure, develop programs to stimulate the hiring of young researchers following the completion of research projects, and develop programs for hiring scientists returning from abroad. The influence of research & innovation in the public and private sectors on the economic growth of Croatia was also addressed. The impact of the Alliance4Life_ACTIONS project on innovations in the School of Medicine Zagreb and the Croatian research & innovation ecosystem was also discussed. This included actions aimed to stimulate collaboration with industry, promote research excellence, and collaborate with partners abroad. The panellists concluded that Croatia has a great intellectual potential for innovations, and that communication among key stakeholders should be continued in the future.

5.3 PHOTOS OF THE EVENT





