

Personal description by the Candidate for 2022-2025 Vice-Presidency:

I am very happy and excited to be a candidate for 2022-2025 Vice-Presidency of IUIS.

I started to work with the IUIS in 2019 when I became Chair of the Publication Committee and Vice Chair of the Vaccine Committee and I am now participating to the organization of the next International Conference of Immunology in Cape Town.

Having spent my scientific life in different countries, I felt at home when I started to collaborate with colleagues from all over the world at the IUIS. I have understood the mechanism, power and potential of this organization based on creating connections between all scientists, independently of where they live and of whether they are famous or not. The need of creating connections among immunologists has become imperative since the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has been devastating the world. We needed to exchange information. Travelling was impossible, conferences prohibited. The PUB-Committee, together with the IUIS journal *Frontiers in Immunology*, has contributed to the connection among immunologists and the diffusion of the most recent findings by helping to organize the IUIS webinars on COVID-19, initiated in 2020. The Webinars, on different subjects now, are still going on and demonstrate every day how important it is to give the opportunity to all scientists to meet, share what they know and develop collaborations.

Why I want to continue working with IUIS and what I would like to do.

1. To continue and improve communication and establish collaborations among immunologists in different continents and countries. Webinars are good instruments, affordable and of easy access. I believe, however, that the quality of science and its recognition strongly depends on the availability of money. We should increase the number and extent of common projects among scientists living in rich countries and those working in areas where the governments are unable to allocate money for science. Personnel should be exchanged. Younger scientists will be trained and the more experienced will transfer their experience and knowledge. Equipment for research is expensive, but indispensable to publish and progress. The grants should also help to achieve a more reasonable availability of instrumentations.
2. The COVID-19 emergency has taught us that working together we can make miracles, such as understanding the pathogenesis of the disease, developing effective vaccine and finding treatments. Immunologists have contributed to create knowledge, but our work has not been completely understood by public health experts and officials. The whole world is still only worried about the decay of the level of neutralizing antibodies, although immunologists have repeatedly demonstrated the mechanisms of immune memory and protection.
We should establish a closer collaboration among immunologists and public health in order to facilitate the development of new vaccines and identify more reliable correlates of protection.
3. We should create channels to communicate with the general population, children and adults. It is possible to explain immunology in simple words. Right now we have to fight vaccine hesitancy and fatigue. For example, people want to know why they should be vaccinated although they might be still infected. We know and can explain.
4. Strengthen our action on the gender equality issue. In several countries campaigns have been made to encourage girls to enter the scientific world. My perspective is that women are already in the science, but their career finds obstacles and real obstructions. Most women do not succeed in obtaining important positions. Notwithstanding their work, intelligence, energy and drive, their career is blocked and they cannot develop a competitive CV. This is not right. I am chair of the Gender Equality Committee of the Italian Society of Immunology Clinical Immunology and Allergy and represent SIICA in the gender quality task-force of EFIS. The Gender Equality Committee of

Rita Carsetti

IUIS is already working with other worldwide organizations. All together we are stronger and should make political pressure to solve the problem. After many years of talks to increase awareness and notwithstanding the achievements in some countries, women still do not have the same chances as men in most parts of the world. We can contribute to solve the problem by bringing forward the idea that gender equality should be mandatory in the selection of candidates for academic positions, when applying for grants and distributing the money.