

EFLMLabX Corner

EFLMLabX user experience: Tara Rolić, Osijek, Croatia in Oslo, Norway

Reported by **Tara Rolić**, Croatia



Mazyar, Sonia and Tara at Oslo University Hospital, Oslo, Norway



Sonia and Tara at Department of laboratory medicine, Oslo University Hospital, Oslo, Norway



Presenting professional and scientific journey at Oslo University Hospital



Department members at teambuilding, Room escape, Oslo, Norway

I have vivid memories of the beginning of my academic journey at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry. It was marked by overwhelming enthusiasm for the field of laboratory medicine, and I eventually earned a master's degree in medical biochemistry. Despite thinking I was done with learning during specialization, life had different plans. An unexpected opportunity arose for a Ph.D. journey at the University of Osijek, Faculty of Medicine. Focused on altered iron metabolism in colorectal cancer patients, compelling project reignited my commitment to the learning process. Alongside working at Osijek University Hospital's Department of Laboratory Diagnostics since 2015 as EuSpLM, I initiated activities in the Croatian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CSMBLM) and the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM). I had the honor to meet and collaborate with colleagues from Europe, directing their enthusiasm to elevate Laboratory Medicine in healthcare system. The possibility of applying for an internship through the EFLM LabX program, intrigued me since first time I heard about it. Despite initial doubts as a fresh specialist and young scientist, I decided to pursue it, fueled by the unwavering support of my colleague, boss, and mentor, Sanja Mandić. Pitching the idea to Sonia Distante from Oslo University Hospital, a mastermind in iron metabolism, proved successful. Sonia, with over 20 years of experience in professional and scientific research in iron metabolism, agreed to host me. My time in Oslo turned out to be a fantastic and mind-blowing escapade. Sonia arranged a surprise lecture by Prof. Tomas Ganz, the discoverer of the hepcidin

protein, setting the tone for an exceptional learning experience. Together with Sonia, I attended Oslo University Hospital laboratory department meetings, professional and scientific lectures, and had the opportunity to discuss and compare laboratory organization differences between Norway and Croatia. The warm welcome and hospitality at the Metabolomics research group, led by Katja Benedikte Prestø Elgstøen, left a lasting impression. During my time at Oslo, I presented a lecture on the clinical significance of hepcidin, iron metabolism, and trace elements in diagnosing colorectal cancer. This provided a platform for valuable discussions and expanded my scientific perspective. The annual seminar and networking opportunities at MBK research seminar in which I was invited as attendee, further enriched my experience. The list of impressive aspects during my LabX at Oslo University Hospital is extensive, but the warmth and home-like feeling, the scientific enrichment in iron metabolism, and the professional insights stand out. The exchange program significantly broadened my perspective as a young laboratory medicine professional and researcher, influencing a positive transformation in my approach. I extend sincere gratitude to those who made LabX possible, including EFLM Sil and Terry, Evgenija, Tomris, Snežana, Klaus; Sanja, Osijek University Hospital; CSMBLM; Oslo University Hospital, Mazyar and all the colleagues at the research groups led by Katja, Lars, and Bjorn. Special thanks to Sonia for accepting me into this challenging journey, becoming a true friend and mentor. This cherished memory will forever remain in my heart. Tusen takk!