Official Journal of the Serbian Association for Cancer Research
Koračak Lj., Nikolić A., Oncol Insights 2026 No. 4

61-006:061.2"2026"
https://doi.org/10.66552/OI202645

Oncology Insights

MEETING REPORT

Open access

Annual congress of the European Association for Cancer Research EACR 2026: Innovative Cancer Science



Zeljić K.[1], Warden R.[2], Čavić M.[3]
[1]*Serbian Association for Cancer Research & University of Belgrade – Faculty of Biology*
[2]*European Association for Cancer Research*
[3]*Serbian Association for Cancer Research & Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia*

The annual congress of the European Association for Cancer Research (EACR), "EACR 2026: Innovative cancer science", was held in Budapest, Hungary, from June 8 to 11, 2026. As every year, this four-day congress was dedicated to a wide range of topics in basic, preclinical, and translational cancer research, hosting more than 2,400 attendees and exhibitors representing nearly 70 different countries.

The scientific program was dense and dynamic, with several parallel scientific and industry symposia, keynote and award lectures, followed by poster sessions. There was a plethora of cutting-edge topics in cancer research, opportunities to meet future collaborators, chances to discuss and spend both scientific and fun time in a lively and motivating atmosphere. Over 1,400 posters were presented alongside high-impact keynote lectures, symposia, and dedicated early-career scientist forums. The event featured a bustling exhibition featuring 120 companies and associations showcasing new technologies and workflows.

Plenary and keynote lectures, EACR General Assembly

The congress opened with a session chaired by dr Yardena Samuels, the EACR's past president. As part of the opening session, Dr. Marisol S. Soengas delivered a lecture on involving patients in cancer research, followed by Dr. Caroline Dive, who gave the opening keynote lecture entitled "A Tale of 3 Biomarkers - diagnosis, prognosis and therapy scheduling". In the continuation of the session, the prestigious Pezcoller-EACR awards were presented, and lectures were given by dr Samra Turajlic, winner of the Pezcoller foundation–EACR translational cancer researcher award 2026, and dr Ayelet Erez, winner of the Pezcoller–Marina Larcher Fogazzaro–EACR Women in Cancer Research Award 2026.

The first day of the congress concluded with the EACR General Assembly and the awards ceremony for travel grant winners. This year, 33 researchers received travel grants. On June 10, the plenary session was dedicated to the development and FDA approval of vemurafenib for melanoma patients, with lectures by dr Gideon Bollang, dr Darrin

Stuart, and dr Keith Flaherty.
Among the key lectures on the final day, talks by dr Xin Lu ("SPOTing cell plasticity and immunochemotherapy of gastrointestinal tumors"), dr Bernhard Kuster ("Phosphoproteome profiling for clinical decision-making in molecular tumor boards"), and dr Eduard Batlle, ("Tumor cell plasticity and immune evasion in metastatic colorectal cancer") stood out.

Symposium

The thematic symposia were one of the main components of the program. In total, 23 symposia were held over the first three days of the congress. The program included sessions dedicated to cancer immunology and immunotherapy; mechanisms of tumor metastasis and cancer prevention; genomics and functional genomics; brain tumors; cellular plasticity and non-genetic evolution of tumors; new models in cancer research and cell cycle regulation; immune activation beyond T cells; genomic instability and tumor innervation; spatial biology of tumors; microbiome and cancer; aging and cancer; tumor initiation; clinical study design; mechanisms of cell death; tumor metabolism and cachexia; as well as chemical biology.
The session "The Dark Proteome", held in collaboration between EACR, EACS, and Molecular Oncology, focused on less-explored parts of the proteome and their potential importance in tumor biology and immune surveillance. As the EACR strives to strengthen its affiliated national cancer societies, the HuCaReS joint symposium was organized in collaboration with the Hungarian Cancer Society (Magyar Onkológusok Társasága – MOT) and the EACR to gain greater insight into the excellent science of MOT members.

Posters in the spotlight

Poster sessions were an important part of the congress held on days two and three. The program also included a special Top abstracts session, in which selected works were presented. Abstracts accepted by the congress organizing committee were published in a supplement of the journal Molecular Oncology (Volume 20, Number S1), an affiliated journal of the EACR.

Focus on early-career researchers

EACR is well known for its commitment to the next generation of researchers. Accordingly, a special focus at the congress was placed on early-career researchers. Through the Meet the expert and Career development session, young researchers had the opportunity to meet and connect with experienced cancer researchers, discuss topics of interest, and learn practical advice useful for their career development.

Women in cancer research

Right before the EACR 2026 congress, the workshop "Women in leadership" was organized for up to 30 pre-registered participants. The workshop aimed to empower women in cancer research to excel as leaders through engaging lectures, panel discussions, and interactive debates on relevant leadership topics. All congress attendees had the opportunity to follow the live broadcast at the congress venue.

SDIR members at EACR 2026 congress

As in previous years, members of the Serbian Association for Cancer Researchers (SDIR) took part in the EACR congress. All 14 members, from different institutions in Serbia, presented a total of nine posters. On behalf of SDIR, Prof. Dr. Katarina Zeljic, a member of the SDIR executive committee, was present in Budapest.

EACR 2027 congress
Next year, the "EACR 2027 Congress: Innovative Cancer Science" will take place in Bilbao, Spain, from 14–17 June 2027. If you would like to find inspiration for your future research, establish new collaborations, and experience the atmosphere of a world-class congress of cancer researchers, do not hesitate to apply. Students and early-career EACR members with less than four years of postdoctoral experience, as well as researchers from low- and middle-income countries, will have the opportunity to apply for travel grants.
Abstract submission and travel grant application deadline is March 2, 2027.

See you next year in Bilbao for the EACR 2027 Congress!

