



FOREUM

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ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Activity report and financial statement

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PROMOTING HEALTH THROUGH EXCELLENT RESEARCH

FOREUM Foundation for Research in Rheumatology is devoted to promoting research in rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) as an EULAR related research funding body focussing on excellence in RMD research. To achieve this goal, FOREUM seeks to raise funds from various donors. Basic and applied research of highest quality will be supported to reduce the burden of disease for people with RMDs. What we have achieved in recent years was only possible thanks to the generous financial support of our loyal as well as new donors. We see this support as a sign of confidence in the value of research funded by FOREUM for the advancement of the field of rheumatology and for society. At the same time, we also see it as a mandate to live up to our high standards of quality in the research supported by FOREUM.

FOREUM will continue to strive to initiate research of the highest quality, which is oriented towards a broad spectrum of disease patterns and will regularly launch calls for proposals for which research projects will be reviewed. We are very pleased that we were again able to finance the best submitted projects in 2024.

We conclude with a word of thanks - first to our current and future donors, then to EULAR for its continued support, and last but not least to all our committee members, staff and others who contribute to making FOREUM a successful and respected institution in European rheumatology research.

Prof Hans Bijlsma

President FOREUM Board of Trustees

General information about the foundation

Purpose of the Foundation pursuant to Art. 2 of the Foundation Charter of 8 May 2013

“The Foundation’s purpose shall be to promote rheumatology research. To this effect, the Foundation shall support rheumatology research projects with financial grants.

The Foundation shall furthermore contribute to

- promote networks in the field of rheumatology research
- facilitate access to research opportunities as well as to activities permitting access to research funding for all European countries.

The purpose of the Foundation is neither commercial nor self-help.”

Tax exemption

By order of the Cantonal Tax Office of Zurich dated 14 October 2013 and confirmed on 28.04.2024, the Foundation was exempted from state tax and general municipal taxes as well as from direct federal tax with effect from its establishment because of the pursuit of charitable purposes.

Statutes and regulations

Foundation Statute of 8 May 2013.

Foundation Regulation of 31 January 2024.

Pursuant to Art. 12 of the Foundation Statutes, the Board of Trustees has issued the “Regulations for the Board of Trustees”, which set out in detail the tasks and responsibilities, working methods and role of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee and the Scientific Committee.

Domicile

FOREUM, Foundation for Research in Rheumatology

Seestrasse 240

8802 Kilchberg- Switzerland

Institution

Board of Trustees (with collective signature of two)

- President Board of Trustees: Prof. Johannes Bijlsma, The Netherlands
- Vice-President Board of Trustees: Prof. Paul Emery (UK)
- Members Board of Trustees:
 - Prof. Jiri Vencovsky (Czech Republic)
 - Prof. Iain McInnes (UK)
 - Carina Haupt, CEO EULAR, as of 01 June 2024

Executive Committee

- Chair: Prof. Oliver Distler (Switzerland)
- Treasurer: Prof. Ulf Müller-Ladner (Germany)
- Members of the committee:
 - Dr. Rikke Helene Moe (Norway) till September 2024- replaced by **Prof. Bente Appel Esbensen, Denmark**
 - Prof. Elsa Sousa (Portugal)
 - Prof. Tore Kvien (Norway) till June 2024- replaced by **Marta Mosca, Italy**
 - Prof. Seza Ozen (Turkey) till June 2024- replaced by **Tadej Avcin, Slovenia**
 - Ms. Codruta Zabalan (Romania)
- Non-voting members ex officio:
 - EULAR President
 - Board of Trustees members
 - Chair Scientific Committee

Scientific Committee

- Chair: Prof. Rik Lories (Belgium)
- Members of the committee:
 - Prof. Jérémie Sellam (France)
 - Dr. Diane von de Woude (The Netherlands)
 - Assoc. Prof. Annette de Thurah, HPR (Denmark)
 - Prof. Xavier Mariette (France) till June 2024- replaced by **Thomas Dörner, Germany**
 - Prof. Kimme Hrych (UK)
 - Dr. Nuria Barbarroja, Spain
 - Prof. Fabrizio de Benedetti, Italy
 - Ms. Heidi Bertheussen, PRP (Norway)
 - Ms. Ana Vieira, PRP (Portugal)

Management of the foundation

For the administrative tasks, secretarial positions are being held by Dr. Astrid Jüngel, FOREUM Manager (100%) and Andrea Beljan, MA (100%).

The Board of Trustees is responsible for management.

Accounting

CMT Partners AG
Dufourstrasse 147
8008 Zürich, Switzerland

Auditor

KPMG AG
Badenerstrasse 172
8036 Zürich, Switzerland

Basics of the foundation's activities

The main task of FOREUM is the promotion of research in the field of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases in the form of an independent research foundation. The aim is to initiate high-quality research into a broad range of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases through financial support. Research projects funded by FOREUM are to be carried out in cooperation with proven research centres from various countries. Only applications for research funds that meet these high standards and that have successfully undergone an external peer review process are considered, which means that the evaluation of the submitting scientific work/projects has been carried out by at least one independent evaluator/scientist from the same subject area.

FOREUM seeks financial support from interested commercial and non-commercial donors (fundraising) to achieve its goals. A list of donors and donations in 2024 is given in the chapter "Income Statement and Balance Sheet 2024". Contributions to FOREUM are guided by the conviction that further research and innovation in this field are crucial for further improvements in the prevention and treatment of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases and thus ultimately the living, working and socio-economic conditions of the more than 120 million people in Europe affected by any form of such diseases.

FOREUM is in principle an institution that defines its strategic goals and tasks independently of other institutions. Nevertheless, the research programme is coordinated with the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology, which is active in the same field. There are different goals of both organisation, EULAR facilitates research, developing tools, harmonising methods, supporting data bases, while FOREUM funds excellent research. Additionally, FOREUM wants to maintain useful contacts with other research organizations interested in this area of research, where meaningful.

For the activity of FOREUM three basic experiences or realisations are crucial:

First, the challenges of modern medicine can best be met through an integrative approach to collaboration. In the short to medium term, far-reaching progress in health care in the sense of a paradigm shift is to be aimed for with the use of modern molecular and cell technologies as well as information and database technologies.

Secondly, rheumatology should play a leading role in its implementation, as its interdisciplinary approach enables it to initiate innovations in many areas of medicine. This makes rheumatology an attractive discipline not only for external sponsors, but also for top researchers and the best of the younger generation of researchers.

Thirdly, important research networks with academic (basic and clinical research) and industrial participation have been established in Europe in recent years. Programmes such as AutoCure,

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Masterswitch, BTCure, EUROTEAM, PRECISEADS, HarmonicSS, and RTCURE have received significant EU funding. Outstanding research results have been achieved, resulting in sustainable skills, networks, large and well-defined biobanks and world-leading technical know-how.

Rheumatology in Europe has already shown that it is able to work together for the good and benefit of the whole. With a view to the future and since the causes, pathways and above all successful treatment options for many rheumatic diseases have not yet been sufficiently clarified, sustainable financing models are still necessary in the long term. FOREUM has set itself the goal of taking on a significant pioneering role as a committed partner.

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Activities of the foundation in the financial year 2024

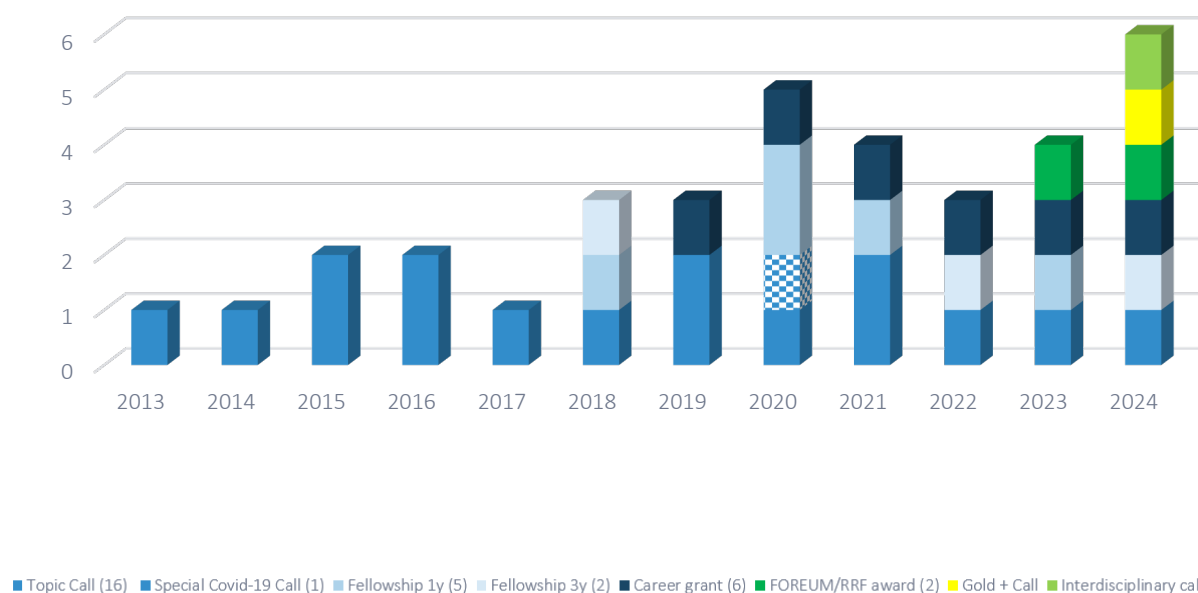
Research Funding

In order to approve the projects and determine the amounts, the submitted projects are examined and evaluated by the Scientific Committee (2 step process: Letter of intent and full proposal upon invitation). Finally, the recommendations of the Scientific Committee are examined and approved by the Executive Committee. The Board of Trustees makes the final decision on the release of the approved project funds. Any unspent funds from the budget allocated for the calls are returned to the pool for new grants.

Review process



Calls per year: 32 calls and 95 projects



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In 2024 FOREUM was able to

a) Approve the **project(s)** for funding for

- 1 Call #27 Fellowship 1y
- 2 Call #28 Topic Call on “Innovative and sustainable models of care, including patient-centred or patient-driven approaches”.
- 3 Call #29 Career Grant

b) Approve the **budget** for upcoming calls.

- 1 Call #30 Fellowship 1y
- 2 Call #31 Topic Call on “Novel Omic Technology approaches to tackle specific unmet needs in Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Disorders”.
- 3 Call #32 Career Grant

	2024	2025
Call # 27: Fellowship 1y	Project approval	
Call #28: Topic call on “Innovative models of care”	Project approval	
Call #29: Career Grant	Project approval	
Call #30: Fellowship 1 year	Call Approved	Project approval planned in 2025
Call #31: Topic Call on “Omics”	Call Approved	Project approval planned in 2025
Call #32: Career grant	Call Approved	Project approval planned in 2025

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c) Approve of the **launch** of industry-partnered calls- first time in 2024

- 1 2024 Platinum-Call with UCB
- 2 2024 Gold-plus Call with Pfizer
- 3 2024 Interdisciplinary projects:
 - Rheumatology and Pulmonology with Boehringer Ingelheim
 - Rheumatology and Nephrology with Novartis

Industry-partnered calls	2024	2025
2024 Platinum-Call with UCB	Call Approved	Project approval planned in 2025
2024 Gold-plus Call with Pfizer	Call Approved	Project approval planned in 2025
2024 Interdisciplinary projects:		
Rheumatology and Pulmonology with Boehringer Ingelheim	Call Approved	Project approval planned in 2025
Rheumatology and Nephrology with Novartis	Call Approved	Project approval planned in 2025

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Within the framework of topic **Call 27: Fellowship 1y**, two projects were selected by the Scientific committee, approved by the Executive Committee, and approved for funding by Board of Trustees. These are the funded projects:

- **27FS1087: Andrea Cere**, Home Center: Research Laboratory and Academic Division of Clinical Rheumatology, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Genova, IRCCS Polyclinic San Martino, Italy. Host Center: VIB-UGent Center for Inflammation Research (IRC), MRB2, Rheumatology Department, Belgium.
Title: “MOnocyte-directed NAnotherapy for Resolution of CHronic arthritis (MONARCH).”
Budget: 50.000 EUR.
- **27FS1088: Grégoire Martin De Fremont**, Home Center: Kremlin-Bicêtre, France. Host Center: Karolinska Institute, Sweden.
Title: “Study of the pathogenesis of congenital heart block (CHB) in anti-SSA antibodies exposed newborns”. Budget: 50.000 EUR.

Within the framework of the **Call 28: Topic Call** on “Innovative and sustainable models of care, including patient-centred or patient-driven approaches”, two projects were selected by the Scientific committee, approved by the Executive Committee, and approved for funding by Board of Trustees. These are the funded projects:

- **28IMC089: Annelies Boonen**, Leading Center: Maastricht University Medical Center, Maastricht, The Netherlands.
Co applicants:
 - **Elena Nikiphorou**, King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK
 - **Iona Andreica**, St. Elisabeth Gruppe GmbH, Herne, GermanyTitle: “Narrowing the socio-economic health gap: adapting and implementing the Conversational Health Literacy Assessment Tool (CHAT) in care for persons with inflammatory rheumatic diseases”. Budget: 226.100 EUR.
- **28IMC090: Lenny van Bon**, Leading Center: Hospital Group Twente, Almelo, The Netherlands.
Co applicants:
 - Christian Dejaco**, Medical University of Graz, Austria
 - Guillermo Carvajal Alegria**, Center Hospitalier Universitaire de Tours, FranceTitle: “Patient Monitored Reduction of glucocorticoids for patients with PolyMyalgia Rheumatica (PMR-4-PMR)”. Budget: 482.000 EUR.

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Within the framework of the **Call 29: Career Grant**, five projects were selected by the Scientific committee, approved by the Executive Committee, and approved for funding by Board of Trustees. These are the funded projects:

- **29CG091: Meredyth Wilkinson**, Home Center: UCL GOS Institute of Child Health London, UK.
Title: “A mitochondrial gene signature to stratify juvenile dermatomyositis patient groups for more targeted treatments”. Budget: 197.544 EUR.
- **29CG092: Janine Gote-Schniering**, Home Center: Department of Rheumatology and Immunology, Bern University Hospital; Lung Precision Medicine, Department for BioMedical Research (DBMR), University of Bern, Switzerland.
Title: “Towards digital cell state profiling: Deciphering the molecular heterogeneity in systemic sclerosis-related interstitial lung disease by spatially-resolved radiomic and molecular profiling”. Budget: 200.000 EUR.
- **29CG093: Loukas Chatzis**, Home Center: Department of Pathophysiology, Medical School, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, Laiko, General Hospital, Greece.
Title: “Investigating the presence, phenotype and function of double negative B cells (CD27-IgD-) in Sjogren’s Disease”. Budget: 200.000 EUR.
- **29CG094: Maarten Steinz**, Home Center: Amsterdam UMC, Department of Rheumatology & Clinical Immunology, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Title: “Muscle weakness in Rheumatoid Arthritis: more than just a decrease in muscle mass”. Budget: 200.000 EUR.
- **29CG095: Eirini Sevdali**, Home Center: Laboratory of Rheumatology, Autoimmunity and Inflammation, Internal Medicine Division, Medical School, University of Crete, Heraklion Greece, Greece.
Title: “Deciphering the inflammatory potential of circulating myeloid cells and their progenitors in arthritis-driven atherosclerosis (AtheRA)”. Budget: 200.000 EUR.

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Meetings Board of Trustees and Executive Committee

The Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee held two meetings on the course of business in the period under review:

- Ratification of the Executive Committee's proposed allocations for three projects (**Call #30: Fellowship 1y**) totalling **€ 150.000**.
- Ratification of the Executive Committee's proposed allocations for two projects (**Call #31: "Novel Omic Technology approaches to tackle specific unmet needs in Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Disorders"**) totalling **€ 1.200.000**.
- Ratification of the Executive Committee's proposed allocations for four projects (**Call #32: Career grant**) totalling **€ 800.000**.
- Ratification of the Executive Committee's proposed launch of the following **industry-partnered calls**:

Launch of the calls in June 2024:

- 2024 Platinum-Call with UCB, Titel: "Understanding pathobiology of axSpA-associated uveitis", 1 project, Budget 100.000 EUR for 1 year.
- 2024 Gold-plus Call with Pfizer, Titel: "Exploring the causal mechanism of JAK-STAT and TNF inhibition influencing the occurrence of malignancy, major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE) and venous thromboembolism (VTE)" 2 projects, Budget 2 x 50.000 EUR for 1 year.

Launch of the calls in October 2024:

2024 Interdisciplinary projects:

- Rheumatology and Pulmonology with Boehringer Ingelheim, 2 projects, Budget 2 x 50.000 EUR for 1 year.
- Rheumatology and Nephrology with Novartis, 1 project, Budget 50.000 EUR for 1 year.

Information on the amount of the research grants

As explained in the previous chapter, FOREUM has approved research grants, some of which have already been paid out. In detail these are:

Call 27: Fellowship 1y. Budget: € 100.000.

- 27FS1087: Andrea Cere, Budget: € 50.000.
- 27FS1088: Grégoire Martin De Fremont, Budget: € 50.000.

Call #28: Topic grant: “Innovative and sustainable models of care, including patient-centred or patient-driven approaches”. Budget: € 708.100.

- 28IMC089: Annelies Boone, Budget: € 226.100.
- 28IMC090: Lenny van Bon, Budget: € 482.000.

Call #29: Career Grant. Budget: € 997.544.

- 29CG091: Meredyth Wilkinson, Budget: € 197.544.
- 29CG092: Janine Gote-Schniering, Budget: € 200.000.
- 29CG093: Loukas Chatzis, Budget: € 200.000.
- 29CG094: Maarten Steinz, Budget: € 200.000.
- 29CG095: Eirini Sevdali, Budget: € 200.000.

Foundation assets

The foundation assets on 31 December 2024 amounted to 9.412.253 EUR and are invested with UBS and Zürcher Kantonalbank (ZKB) Zurich in current accounts in EUR and CHF and in securities with a stock market price.

The foundation assets are managed by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer, as a member of the Executive Committee, is regularly informed by the Secretariat about payments and account balances. The Treasurer reports to the Board of Trustees at regular intervals on the financial situation of FOREUM. Expenditure planned is examined and approved by the Board of Trustees in full knowledge of the financial situation of the Foundation. The details are set out in the appendix to the annual report.

Income statement and balance sheet 2024

Income statement

The 2024 income statement ends with a positive result of 950.883 EUR, with donations received last year amounting to 2.660.000 EUR. In addition to other costs, personnel expenses amounted to 264.337 EUR and operating expenses to 246.687 EUR.

Balance sheet

The balance sheet at the end of 2024 includes assets of 9.412.253 EUR in the form of cash and cash equivalents and invested in securities. Shareholders' equity of 3.009.719 EUR is made up of 100.000 EUR endowment capital, 1.958.836 EUR retained earnings, and 950.883 EUR net profit for 2024.

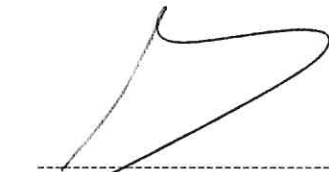
	2024	2024 Industry-partnered projects
EULAR	700.000	
UCB	500.000	
AbbVie	300.000	
Pfizer	300.000	100.000
GSK	150.000	
BMS	100.000	
Janssen	100.000	
Novartis	100.000	50.000
Vifor Pharma	100.000	
Boehringer Ingelheim	80.000	80.000
	2.430.000	230.000
Total		2.660.000

PROMOTING HEALTH THROUGH EXCELLENT RESEARCH

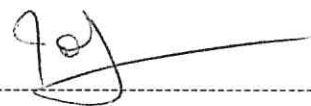
Platinum Donors	  
Gold Donors	 
Silver Donors	    
Bronze Donors	

Resolution of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees approved the activity report and annual financial statements for 2024 on 10 June 2025 and adopted unanimously. The auditors for the coming 2024 financial year were also confirmed.



Prof. Hans Bijlsma,
President Board of Trustees



Prof. Iain McInnes,
Member Board of Trustees

Kilchberg, 10 June 2025

Appendix risk evaluation and management

As part of its duties, the Board of Trustees regularly reviews all organs and processes of the foundation to identify risks and, as far as possible, avoid or at least mitigate them. At its meetings on 31 January 2024 and 11 June 2024, the Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the decisions and recommendations of the Executive and the Scientific Committee and found the decision-making processes to be good. In its assessment of the financial situation of FOREUM, the Board of Trustees reviewed the revenues and planned expenditures and approved them in accordance with the foundation's assets. No financial risks are discernible regarding the current activities of the foundation. To avoid financial risks in the future, the Board of Trustees reserves the right to make adjustments at any time. The principle only applies that donations are made for which the financial framework is 100% guaranteed.

Contact Information

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