

European Society for Biomaterials-YSF (ESB-YSF) Board Elections Application Form

It should not exceed two A4 pages and should include a photo of the candidate.

Name: Ilijana Kovrlija

Nationality: Bosnian

Date of birth: 03.10.1994



Current position (position, affiliation): Postdoctoral researcher, CÚRAM, SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices, University of Galway, Ireland

Research interests (5 keywords): Immunomodulatory biomaterials, calcium phosphates, drug delivery, hydrogels, foreign body response

Position applied for (please rank your preferences from 1 (most preferred position) to 6 (less preferred position)):

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 | YSF Spokesperson |
| 5 | YSF communication and dissemination officer |
| 1 | YSF educational officer |
| 4 | YSF secretary |
| 3 | YSF national chapters liaison officer |

Past ESB conferences attended:

1. **Kovrlija I.**, Menshikh K., Rimondini L., Combes C., Locs J., Loca D., “Rethinking ISO 10993-5: Enhancing *In Vitro* Cytotoxicity Assessment for Octacalcium Phosphate, Amorphous Calcium Phosphate, Tricalcium Phosphate and Hydroxyapatite”. 34th Annual Conference of the European Society of Biomaterials ESB 2025, 07.09.2025-11.09.2025, Turin, Italy; oral.
2. **Kovrlija I.**, O.Demir, M. Laizane, J.Locs, D.Loca "Novel drug delivery vehicle: doxorubicin-loaded octacalcium phosphate". 33rd Annual Conference of the European Society of Biomaterials ESB 2023, 04.09.2023-08.09.2023, Davos, Switzerland; poster.
3. **Kovrlija I.**, C.Barbut, J.Locs, D.Loca "Incorporation and effect of lidocaine hydrochloride on octacalcium phosphate". 32nd Annual Conference of the European Society of Biomaterials ESB 2022, 04.09.2022-08.09.2022, Bordeaux, France; poster.
4. **Kovrlija I.**, C.Barbut, J.Locs, D.Loca “Effects of the synthesis conditions on the hydrolysis of α -tricalcium phosphate to octacalcium phosphate”. 31st Annual Conference of the European Society for Biomaterials, ESB 2021 (online); poster.

Candidate summary (max 1 page)

Motivation:

I am highly motivated to join the Young Scientist Forum (YSF) Board to actively contribute to the growth of the biomaterials community in Europe and support the young researchers within it. Having completed my bachelor's and master's studies in Serbia, a developing and low-funded research environment, I quickly learned how vital collaboration and knowledge exchange are for both scientific progress and career advancement. During my PhD in Riga Technical University (Latvia), I was deeply involved in international, interdisciplinary projects such as PREMURSA (MSCA-ITN), BBCE (H2020), and RISEus2 (H2020 Twinning), and now as a MedTrain+ (MSCA COFUND) postdoctoral fellow at CÚRAM, University of Galway (Ireland), I continue bridging material science and biomedical applications through EU collaboration. These experiences have strengthened my belief that openness, communication, and teamwork among young scientists are key to advancing our field.

Throughout these experiences, I have developed strong interpersonal, leadership, and intercultural communication skills, along with a proactive mindset and high adaptability, qualities that motivate me to help YSF foster an even more supportive, collaborative, and inspiring environment for young researchers. Furthermore, as a YCN representative in the European Ceramic Society and a member of ESB since 2021, I have seen the positive impact of YSF activities and would be eager to help further develop initiatives that connect researchers, promote mentorship, and raise the visibility of young scientists within the ESB network.

Possible Achievements:

Building on already impressive levels YSF community managed to achieve, I would like to help make YSF activities even more inclusive by creating more opportunities for participation of non-EU researchers, for instance through lectures or outreach events in developing countries that highlight available programs and mobility opportunities. I have a strong interest in contributing to more interactive and inclusive YSF initiatives, from webinars and networking events to short video interviews showcasing young researchers' success stories.

Communication skills:

My communication skills have been shaped through active participation and organization of international scientific events, including ScSB 2022 and the PREMURSA/RISEus2 Joint Summer School 2023, where I coordinated sessions, managed speakers, and supported networking among early-career researchers. I have delivered numerous oral and poster presentations at international conferences such as ESB, TERMIS-EU, and World Biomaterials Congress, while earning recognition in events supporting young researchers (Student Speech Contests by ECERS and Bioceramics network) and through the EDA Julia Polak by ESB Community.

Working within multidisciplinary teams across Europe has allowed me to build strong interpersonal and intercultural communication skills, facilitating collaboration between materials scientists, biologists, and clinicians. Through my involvement in dissemination and outreach activities within EU-funded projects (Researchers Night, Shadow Days, science journals for kids), I have also gained experience in science communication, promoting research outcomes to both academic and non-specialist audiences.

Any other ideas/remarks:

I strongly believe that YSF can further empower young scientists by promoting open discussions about research culture, work-life balance, and leadership. I also find it essential to raise awareness of how much postdocs and PhD researchers contribute to science, and that they should be valued, and compensated, in line with their skills and responsibilities.