



FOREUM FORWARD

Research that Connects

Q3 2026



A Message from the Past President

Prof. Hans Bijlsma

"Looking back on my time as President of the FOREUM Board of Trustees, I am proud of the progress we achieved together. We strengthened FOREUM's financial position and introduced important new initiatives, including the FOREUM Academy and its annual Bootcamp, as well as industry-supported and multidisciplinary calls.

Among these, the FOREUM Bootcamp has become a unique forum for exchange between leading researchers and thought leaders from academia and industry. Over three intensive days, participants explore themes such as remission or cure, innovative trial design, therapeutic failure and treatment trajectories with discussions leading to white papers published in the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*.

None of this would have been possible without the commitment of the Executive Committee, Scientific Committee, Board of Trustees and FOREUM staff. My sincere thanks go to everyone who contributed to these achievements and helped build the strong foundation from which FOREUM continues to move **forward**."



A Message from the Incoming President

Prof. Iain McInnes

"We embark upon the next, and perhaps the most exciting, phase of our journey as we investigate the causes and optimal treatments of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases. The momentum gathered in the last two decades which delivered 'pathogenesis-informed medicines', administered via rational, evidence based therapeutic strategies and protocols, has transformed outcomes for our patients.

But we have so much more to do! Remission is enticing and increasingly, it is understood at a mechanistic level - we should now transform it into an expected and achievable target. The real frontier is cure - the next wave of therapeutics is firmly aimed at this previously unheralded ambition.

To achieve this FOREUM, working in close union with EULAR, will continue to fund outstanding research proposals, enhance the careers of the most promising researchers and integrate ideas and expertise across the EULAR community, united in common purpose to enhance the lives of people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases."

Call launches Q3 - 2026 and Updates

FOREUM Topic Grant

Sleep disturbances in, and impact on, patients with RMDs

- Multi-centre research
- Open to early career and established researchers



BUDGET
EUR 600K



DURATION
3 years



DEADLINE
30 Oct 2026

FOREUM-EULAR Topic Grant

Innovative, patient-centred treatment strategies in RMDs using the potential of the EULAR-ENTRI clinical trial network

- Open to researchers at any career stage, from EULAR-member countries



BUDGET
EUR 500K



DURATION
3 years



DEADLINE
30 Oct 2026

Platinum Grant – partnering with UCB

The molecular mechanisms of non-response to TNF inhibitors in patients with spondyloarthritis

- Open to researchers at any career stage, from EULAR-member countries



BUDGET
EUR 100K



DURATION
1 year



DEADLINE
05 Oct 2026

EXTENDED

Gold Plus Grant – partnering with Novartis

Building Multidisciplinary Care Models for Cellular Therapies in Rheumatic Diseases

- Open to researchers at any career stage, from EULAR-member countries



BUDGET
EUR 100K



DURATION
1 year



DEADLINE
05 Oct 2026

EXTENDED

UPDATES & LOOKING AHEAD

NEW NAME

The Advanced Career Grant will become the **FOREUM Consolidator Career Grant** from 2027.

This grant aims to support independent scientists in advancing their careers by leading their own research teams.



BUDGET
EUR 200K



DURATION
3 years



OPENS
Jan 2027

FOREUM Early Career Grant

A **new** funding opportunity supporting outstanding early-career researchers in RMDs
Open to applicants up to 4 years post PhD or MD



BUDGET
EUR 150K



DURATION
3 years



DEADLINE
closed

50 applications received

Advanced Career Grant 2026: RECIPIENTS

**EDOARDO CIPOLLETTA** (ITA)

Optimising gout management across the disease spectrum: from primary prevention to better targeted management

**ANDREA DELL'ISOLA** (NLD)

MAP-OA: Mapping causal risk profiles for precision osteoarthritis prevention by integrating environmental, health, and genetic data

**KRISTINA CLARK** (UK)

A multi-tissue, single-cell approach to understanding fibrosis in systemic sclerosis gastrointestinal disease

**MUHAMMAD SHIPA** (UK)

IgA1 anti-domain I antibodies drive innate immune activation and pregnancy complications in obstetric antiphospholipid syndrome (OAPS)

RESEARCH THAT CONNECTS

Building careers. Advancing research.

Meet two researchers whose FOREUM-funded projects helped build research programmes, create new collaborations and shape the next stage of their careers. **First, Edoardo Cipolletta.**

**EDOARDO CIPOLLETTA**

Rheumatologist and clinical researcher
Marche University Hospitals / Polytechnic
University of Marche
Ancona, Italy

Edoardo's clinical and research work focuses on crystal arthritis, connective tissue diseases and musculoskeletal ultrasonography. His path into rheumatology began at medical school, inspired by Prof. Walter Grassi, and later took him to the University of Nottingham, where a **EULAR training grant** introduced him to epidemiological research, working alongside Prof. Abhishek Abhishek.

FOREUM funding became an important next step. A **FOREUM Fellowship Grant** enabled him to complete an MSc in Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. During the three-year fellowship, he developed new methodological skills, built an international research network, published three papers and presented at conferences abroad.

"I moved from contributing to other people's projects to leading my own."

The experience changed not only his skills, but his career plans. Having independent funding gave him the opportunity to pursue his ambition of an academic career in rheumatology.

He learnt how to manage complex statistical methods, budgets and timelines, while taking increasing responsibility for developing and leading his own research.

The collaborations established during this period have continued to generate new opportunities and research directions, connecting him with groups across Europe and beyond.

Now funded by FOREUM for a second time, he sees his Advanced Career Grant as the next stage in that progression.

"The FOREUM Fellowship Grant was a springboard: it accelerated my move from trainee to clinical researcher. Where the Fellowship trained me under close mentorship, the Advanced Career Grant lets me initiate and lead my own independent programme and grow into a group leader."

For researchers considering applying to FOREUM, his advice is simple: start with a strong research question, make the application as clear as possible, and **don't be discouraged by an unsuccessful first attempt.**

RESEARCH THAT CONNECTS

Building careers. Advancing research.

Our second profile looks at how FOREUM funding helped Muriel Elhai establish her independence, build a research team and open the door to further opportunities.



MURIEL ELHAI

Rheumatologist and physician-scientist
University Hospital Zürich
Zürich, Switzerland

Based at University Hospital Zürich, Muriel divides her time equally between clinical work and research. Her research interests lie in systemic autoimmune diseases, particularly systemic sclerosis and the mechanisms underlying fibrosis, alongside a strong focus on patient-centred research.

For her, clinical practice and research have always been closely connected. “I often think of rheumatology as a kind of detective work,” she says. “What I observe in clinical practice, and the questions it raises, can become research questions, while discoveries in the laboratory can reshape my understanding of disease and ultimately influence the way I care for my patients.”

Her **FOREUM Career Grant** came at a crucial point in the development of her research career. It enabled her to support a PhD student and generate preliminary results that were essential to opening doors for further funding and the gradual expansion of her research team.

“FOREUM funding allowed me to establish myself as an independent principal investigator and to start building my own research group.”

For Muriel, this is one of **FOREUM’s particular strengths**: supporting researchers at the point when they have developed their own ideas and are ready for independence but may not yet be established enough to compete for the largest national or international grants. **“FOREUM can provide exactly the first foundation that is needed.”**

The funding also helped her **develop as a research leader** – supervising and inspiring young researchers, particularly young women, to consider fulfilling careers combining clinical work and research.

Looking back, she also values FOREUM’s increasing emphasis on patient involvement. **“Research should not only be scientifically strong but should also address questions that are meaningful to patients and, wherever possible, involve them in shaping the research process.”**

Her advice to other rheumatology researchers is simple: apply. FOREUM’s range of funding opportunities, she says, can provide the support needed to develop new ideas, build a research programme and take the next step in an academic career.

Interested in FOREUM funding opportunities?

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