

I had the honor to receive a SSM travel grant to attend the first EMBO conference on “Bacterial morphogenesis, survival and virulence: regulation in 4D”, which took place in the astonishing capital of the Indian state of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, from the 27<sup>th</sup> of November to December 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. During this interesting conference, which brought together numerous experts from all over the world, the field of bacteriology was covered within 15 sessions on various topics such as “Genome biology”, “Microbial stress and interactions”, “Virulence and secretion” or “Morphogenesis and machines”. The opening lecture was given by Prof. Jeff Errington (Newcastle). He gave a brilliant talk on wall-deficient or so-called L-form bacteria, a lifestyle that may help these organisms to survive treatment with cell wall-targeting antibiotics. Also during the first session, Dr. Nathalie Campo (Toulouse) talked about natural competence for transformation in *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. More precisely, she showed how a competence protein is delaying cell division in order to preserve genome integrity. Another fascinating story, among many others, was presented by Prof. Marie Elliot (Hamilton). She revealed an interaction of *Streptomyces* bacteria with fungi and that this exploratory behavior is based on the production of a volatile compound. Importantly, I myself had the great opportunity to present my doctoral work performed in the group of Prof. Melanie Blokesch at EPFL as a short talk and through a poster presentation, both of which gave me the opportunity to discuss my work with and receive feedback from several prestigious researchers. My research is focusing on the acquisition of exogenous DNA via natural transformation of *Vibrio cholerae*. This mode of horizontal gene transfer is enhanced by deliberate neighbor predation and lysis by means of the pathogen’s type VI secretion system. Overall, my participation to this conference and the ability to present my research was a wonderful experience, which was rewarded by the organizers through a poster prize.

