The Tumour Ecosystem: From Mechanisms to Novel Therapeutics Programme

Bergamo, Italy

17 - 19 March 2026

Scientific Programme

Tuesday 17th March 2026

Listed times are in Central European Time (CET)

11:30 REGISTRATION (LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED AT 12:00)

13:00 CONFERENCE WELCOME

SESSION 1

Chair: Leila Akkari

13:10 OPENING KEYNOTE LECTURE

Ashani Weeraratna

Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, USA

'A Complex TIME: how the tumor immune microenvironment governs tumor progression'

Q&A 13:40 - 13:55

13:55 **Neta Erez**

Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel

'Stromal and Immune Plasticity Shape the Metastatic Microenvironment'

Q&A 14:15 - 14:25

14:25 **Sebastian Igelmann**

KuLeuven-VIB, Belgium

Proffered Paper 1: 'Age-accumulated senescent cells fuel melanoma metastasis growth via NK cell inhibition'

Q&A 14:35 - 14:40

14:40 EXHIBITOR INTRODUCTIONS

Led by members of the Scientific Programme Committee

14:50 COFFEE BREAK, EXHIBITION AND SOLO TRAVELLER MEET-UP

15:20 **Daniela Quail**

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

'Exploiting myeloid-driven inflammation in cancer progression'

Q&A 15:40 - 15:50

15:50 **Erik Sahai**

Francis Crick Institute, London, UK

'Modeling Tumor-Stroma Boundaries'

Q&A 16:10 - 16:20

16:20 POSTER SPOTLIGHTS

Led by members of the Scientific Programme Committee

16:35 NETWORKING QUIZ

17:05 WELCOME RECEPTION

18:00 POSTER DISCUSSION SESSION 1
Led by members of the Scientific Programme Committee

Wednesday 18th March 2026

Listed times are in Central European Time (CET)

08:15 EARLY POSTER VIEWING WITH COFFEE & BISCUITS

08:45 INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT - CELL SIGNALING TECHNOLOGY
Flora Guarnotta
Cell Signaling Technology
'Spatial Analysis of Tumor Microenvironments via SignalStar® Multiplex IHC'

SESSION 2
Chair: Erik Sahai

09:00 **Yardena Samuels**
Weizmann Institute, Rehovot, Israel
'The various layers of intratumor heterogeneity and their impact on tumor immunity'

Q&A 09:20 - 09:30

09:30 **Merav Cohen**
Tel Aviv University, Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Israel
Proffered Paper 2: 'Single cell transcriptomics of efferocytosis identifies a pro-angiogenic tumor associate macrophage state in melanoma'

Q&A 09:40 - 09:45

09:45 **Mikael Pittet**
Agora, Lausanne, Switzerland
'Myeloid cells in cancer'

Q&A 10:05 - 10:15

10:15 **Andrea Schietinger**
MSKCC, New York, USA
'Tumor-specific CD8 T cell differentiation and dysfunction'

Q&A 10:35 - 10:45

10:45 COFFEE BREAK & EXHIBITION

11:15 **Mara Sherman**
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, USA
'Mapping cellular hierarchies in the pancreatic tumor microenvironment'

Q&A 11:35 - 11:45

11:45 **Greta Mattavelli**
University Hospital Würzburg, Germany
Proffered Paper 3: 'Tumor-draining lymph node stroma supports pre-metastatic niche formation by promoting immunosuppressive cellular networks'

Q&A 11:55 - 12:00

12:00 POSTER SPOTLIGHTS
Led by members of the Scientific Programme Committee

12:15 LUNCH

13:15 POSTER DISCUSSION SESSION 2

Led by members of the Scientific Programme Committee

SESSION 3

Chair: Johanna Joyce

14:45 THE EMBO YOUNG INVESTIGATOR LECTURE

Leila Akkari

Netherlands Cancer Institute, Amsterdam, Netherlands

'Leveraging Myeloid Cell Diversity in Cancer- A Matter of Plasticity and Metabolism'

Q&A 15:05 - 15:15

15:15 **Charles Earnshaw**

CRUK Manchester Institute, UK

Proffered Paper 4: 'Glucocorticoids inhibit the GARP/TGF-β axis triggering immune-dependent melanoma control'

Q&A 15:25 - 15:30

15:30 **Nicolae Ciobu Zubenco**

Columbia University, USA

Proffered Paper 5: 'Lipid desaturation as a metabolic checkpoint for T cell immunity suppression in liver cancer'

Q&A 15:40 - 15:45

15:45 **Anna Obenauf**

IMP, Austria

'Unlocking immunity: Decoding and reprogramming the immune-evasive tumor microenvironment'

Q&A 16:05 - 16:15

16:15 COFFEE BREAK & EXHIBITION

16:45 **Ilaria Malanchi**

Francis Crick Institute, London, UK

'Shaped by Cancer: Neutrophil Systemic Rewiring and Metastatic Support'

Q&A 17:05 - 17:15

17:15 **Jacco van Rheenen**

NKI, Amsterdam, Netherlands

'Timing Matters: How Hormonal Rhythms Govern Mutation Clearance, Cancer Initiation, and Treatment Response'

Q&A 17:35-17:45

17:45 PANEL DISCUSSION - MEET THE EXPERT

Ashani Weeraratna (Johns Hopkins, USA), Daniela Quail (McGill University, Canada), Direna Alonso-Curbelo (IRB Barcelona, Spain), Jacco van Rheenen (NKI, Netherlands)

19:30 CONFERENCE DINNER (OPTIONAL TICKETED EVENT)

Thursday 19th March 2026

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08:15 EARLY POSTER VIEWING WITH COFFEE & BISCUITS

08:45 INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT - MOLECULENT

Jeroen Aerts
Moleculent
'Deciphering cell-cell interactions at scale'

SESSION 4
Chair: Neta Erez

09:00 THE EMBO KEYNOTE LECTURE

Johanna Joyce
University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland
'Unraveling the Complexity of Cancer Ecosystems'

Q&A 09:20 - 09:30

09:30 **Dinorah Friedmann-Morvinski**
TAU, Tel Aviv, Israel
'Overcoming the immunosuppressive Microenvironment to enhance CAR T cell therapy in brain tumors'

Q&A 09:50 - 10:00

10:00 **Sarai Martinez Pacheco**
Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Oncológicas (CNIO), Spain
Proffered Paper 6: 'TET2-Dependent Immunosuppressive Programs Drive Ovarian Cancer Progression'

Q&A 10:10 - 10:15

10:15 COFFEE BREAK & EXHIBITION

10:45 **Direna Alonso-Curbelo**
IRB Barcelona, Spain
'When Tissues Decide: Epigenetic Plasticity at the Crossroads of Inflammation and Cancer'

Q&A 11:05 - 11:15

11:15 CLOSING KEYNOTE LECTURE

Frank Winkler
DKFZ, Heidelberg, Germany
'Neural influences on brain tumors: from fundamental insights to new therapies'

Q&A 11:45 - 12:00

12:00 SUMMARY & CLOSE

12:10 DEPART