



# FunShield4Med

**SHIELDING FOOD SAFETY AND SECURITY BY ENABLING THE FORESIGHT OF  
FUNGAL SPOILAGE AND MYCOTOXINS THREATS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION  
UNDER CLIMATE CHANGE CONDITIONS**

## **D4.2 - International conference for young scientists**

<b>DELIVERABLE NUMBER</b>	D4.2
<b>DELIVERABLE TITLE</b>	International conference for young scientists
<b>RESPONSIBLE AUTHOR</b>	Olga Papadopoulou (ELGO-ITAP)



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WORKPACKAGE LEADER	NKUA
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1.0	Final version	30/04/2025	O. Papadopoulou (ELGO-ITAP)

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## ACRONYMS LIST

ITAP	Institute of Technology of Agricultural Products
ELGO	Ellinikos Georgikos Organismos (Hellenic Agricultural Organisation)
ITAP	Institute of Technology of Agricultural Products
EC	European Commission
HE	Horizon Europe EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation
ACAC	Athens Conference on Advances in Chemistry
ECSs	Early-Career Scientists
ESRs	Early-Stage Researchers
UNIPR	University of Parma
AUTH	Aristotle's University of Thessaloniki

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present deliverable “Deliverable 4.2. International conference for young scientists” presents the outputs and significance of the 4<sup>th</sup> Athens Conference on Advances in Chemistry (ACAC) 2024 which took place on November 6-8, 2024, at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, under co-organisation with the widening country’s coordinator of FunShield4Med project (ELGO-ITAP). This international event is organised every 2 years from 2018 and has the primary aim to provide a platform for young scientists to exchange knowledge, present research findings, and engage with leading experts in the field of Chemistry. Additionally, and under the co-organisation mode with ELGO-ITAP, its personnel acquired substantial training on the organisation of such events. The 4<sup>th</sup> ACAC was co-organized by the 2 Greek beneficiaries of FunShield4Med project, NKUA and ELGO-ITAP, while ESR team members from both acquired substantial training on the organisation of such events.

The scientific structure, invited speakers, and overall organization were co-managed by project team members from ELGO ITAP and NKUA, ensuring a diverse and high-quality program.

The Conference, initially created to enhance the organisational and managerial experience of early-stage researchers (ESRs), surpassed our expectations attracting 145 participants from more than 10 countries, of whom more than half (82 MSc or PhD candidates) were ESRs! Apart from the responsibilities undertaken by the ITAP personnel, many undergraduate and postgraduate students of our project partner NKUA, Dept of Chemistry, had crucial hands on regarding the organisation and realisation of the event.

ACAC2024 featured plenary sessions, oral presentations, and poster exhibitions covering key topics such as Analytical Chemistry, Environmental Chemistry, Biochemistry, Organic Chemistry, Food Chemistry, Inorganic Chemistry, Physical Chemistry and Industrial Chemistry.

A special session on Food Safety, Mycotoxins & Climate Change was dedicated to the FunShield4Med project, where the coordinator Dr Pantelis Natskoulis and with the contribution of Prof. Chiara Dall’Asta presented the project's objectives, along with key research findings, highlighting the project's role in addressing emerging challenges in food safety under changing climatic conditions. A comprehensive overview of the educational activities carried out so far — including workshops, seminars, and summer schools — was also provided.

With active participation from early-career researchers and experts from various universities and research institutions, ACAC2024 fostered scientific collaboration, networking opportunities, and knowledge exchange, reinforcing its impact on the international research community.

The document presents an introduction (Chapter 1) to the subjects addressed under the ACAC2024 conference co-organised by the project FunShield4Med, and with the program and lectures from speakers (many of them invited by the project), participation metrics, and relevant materials (photos, etc), under Chapter 2.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>ACAC2024 conference summary</b>	<b>10</b>



## LIST OF FIGURES

1	General information of ACAC2024 organizers	10
2	ACAC2024 conference promotional poster	11
3	The Organizing Committee of ACAC2024. Members of FunShield4Med are highlighted in red circles.	12
4	The Scientific Committee of ACAC2024. Members of FunShield4Med are highlighted in red circles.	13
5	ACAC2024 plenary speakers (in blue circles those invited by FunShield4Med project)	14
6	ACAC2024 invited speakers (in blue circles those invited by FunShield4Med project)	15
7	Prof. M. Graetzel on the podium during his lecture	17
8	Prof. N. Thomaidis on the podium during his lecture	17
9	Prof. C. Proestos chairing (left) and on the podium with Prof. C. Dall'Asta (right) during the Satellite Session of FunShield4Med	18
10	Prof. Emer. K. Biliaderis (AUTH), invited speaker by FunShield4Med, presenting “Cereal grain polysaccharides as functional food ingredients: structure-property relations”.	19
11	Prof. V. Valdramidis (on the right) and Prof. C. Proestos (on the left) chairing Satellite Session of FunShield4Med	19
12	Shiye Lin, Jinan University (China), Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Vigo, Spain presenting “The stability and degradation products of polyhydroxy flavonols in boiling water”	20
13	Dejan Stojković, invited speaker of FunShield4Med in the Food Chemistry Plenary Session (University of Belgrade, Serbia) presenting “Mushrooms as natural resources of functional food and biologically active compounds”	20
14	Snapshots from oral presentations	21
15	Photo taken during Plenary Session 5: FOOD CHEMISTRY. Prof Emer. K. Biliaderis (AUTH) as a speaker and the chairmen Prof. V. Valdramidis (on the right) and Prof. C. Proestos (on the left) from NKUA, Greece	22



16	<p><b>Photo taken during the closing ceremony of ACAC2024. Pictured are members of the Scientific and Organizing Committees along with conference participants and ESRs/ECSs actively involved to organisation</b></p>	23
17	<p><b>FunShield4Med team presented 2 posters. Dr M. Metafa an optimization study on the unique TGI/TSG Greek wine “Retsina”, and Dr P. Natskoulis the results of Fumonisins &amp; Zearalenone mycotoxins presence in cereals from Greek Market</b></p>	24

## LIST OF TABLES

1	<b>List of participants by country of origin</b>	10
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## Introduction

FunShield4Med is an EU-funded project focused on food safety against mycotoxigenic spoilage fungi and mycotoxins under climate change challenges. The primary aim of the project is to enhance the scientific excellence and innovation capacity of the Institute of Technology of Agricultural Products (ITAP) of Hellenic Agricultural Organization – DIMITRA (ELGO-DIMITRA) in Greece. By fostering strategic collaboration with advanced partners, the project ensures the transfer of knowledge and expertise, helping to build new research alliances, and enriching the capacities of both the institute's personnel and young researchers across the consortium.

A key component of Work Package 4 (WP4) “Enhancement of mobility and scientific potential of young scientists” is designed to unlock the scientific potential of Early Career Scientists (ECSs) and Early-Stage Researchers (ESRs) by facilitating increased mobility and the acquisition of novel skills, techniques, and knowledge. The multidisciplinary nature of the consortium will help expand their scientific work of these researchers into diverse fields.

Task 4.2. “The enhancement of management experience of young scientists” focuses on improving the management capabilities of ECRs through responsibilities such as organizing short-term visits, disseminating scientific results, coordinating presentations at Science Festivals and Research Nights, and finally hosting an International Conference for Young Scientists (M30). This conference, organized in the field of chemistry in general, had also a Plenary Session dedicated to Food Chemistry and a Satellite Session specifically for FunShield4med, had participation from ESRs and ECSs and took place as a key milestone of the project (M30).

Deliverable D4.2. is dedicated to the presentation of this international conference for young scientists, which aims to enhance the management experience of young scientists. The ACAC 2024, was held November 6th-8th, 2024, as an international conference organized by the Department of Chemistry of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) at the Aristotelis Congress Centre on the NKUA campus (the conference website is available at [www.ACAC2024.gr](http://www.ACAC2024.gr)).

The goal of this conference series was to provide a platform for researchers from academia and industry worldwide to exchange innovative ideas and discuss the latest advancements in chemistry.

## 1. ACAC2024 conference summary



**Athens Conference on Advances in Chemistry**

**November 6 – November 8, 2024**

[WELCOME NOTE](#) · [COMMITTEES](#) · [CONFIRMED SPEAKERS](#) · [PROGRAM](#) · [ABSTRACTS](#) · [REGISTRATIONS](#) · [GENERAL INFORMATION](#) · [SPONSORS](#) · [CONTACT](#)



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
National and Kapodistrian  
University of Athens  
EST. 1837  
Department of Chemistry

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### ORGANIZER

Department of Chemistry  
  
 HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
National and Kapodistrian  
University of Athens  
EST. 1837

#### CO-ORGANIZER



#### Under the auspices of IADNS



#### DATES

The 'Athens Conference on Advances in Chemistry' will take place between Wednesday, 6 November and Friday 8 November 2024.

**Figure 1.** General information of ACAC2024 organizers

The Conference, initially created to enhance the organisational and managerial experience of early-stage researchers (ESRs), surpassed our expectations attracting 145 participants from more than 10 countries, of whom more than half (82 MSc or PhD candidates) were ESRs. In detail, among the 145 participants, 30 were MSc students, 52 were PhD candidates, and the remaining 63 were faculty members of NTUA and personnel from ELGO-DIMITRA.

**Table 1.** List of participants by country of origin.

Country	Participants
Belgium	1
Croatia	2
France	1
Germany	4
Greece	126
Poland	2
Serbia	2
Spain	2
Switzerland	1
UK	4

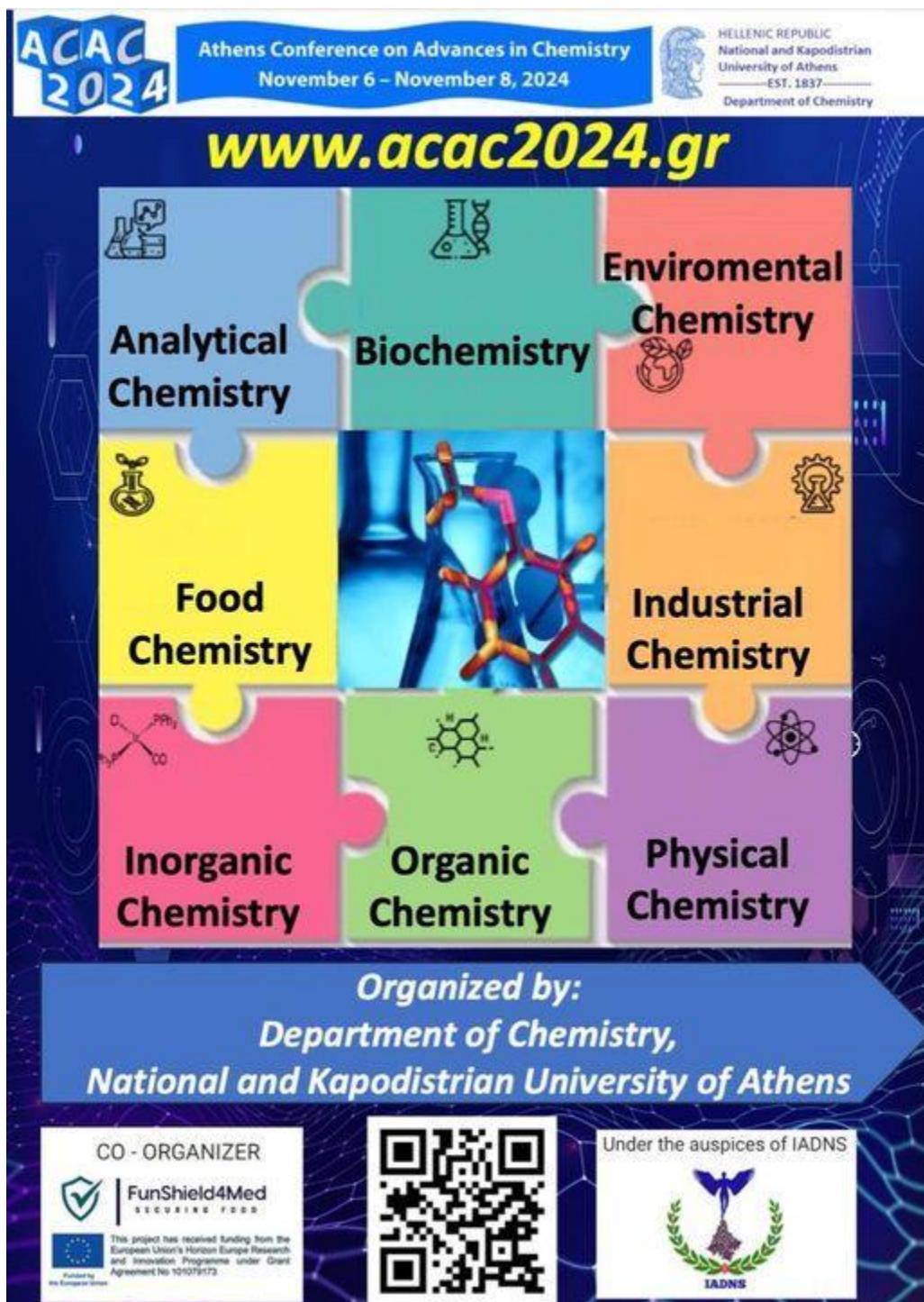


Figure 2. ACAC2024 conference promotional poster



## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



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Figure 3. The Organizing Committee of ACAC2024. Members of FunShield4Med are highlighted in red circles.



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Professor of Chemistry, University of Crete

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Figure 4: The Scientific Committee of ACAC2024. Members of FunShield4Med are highlighted in red circles.



## CONFIRMED SPEAKERS

### PLENARY SPEAKERS



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Institute for Cancer Research,  
Lausanne, Switzerland

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**Thomas Carell**

University, Munich, Germany

[View More](#)



**Michael Graetzel**

Full Professor, Director of the  
Laboratory of Photonics and  
Interfaces at Ecole Polytechnique  
Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL),  
Switzerland

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**Brianna Heazlewood**

University of Liverpool, United  
Kingdom

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, Laboratory for Physical Chemistry  
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Environmental Research, Ruđer  
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**Jianbo Xiao**

, Adjunct Professor at Jinan  
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Food Science and Technology,  
University of Vigo, Spain

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**Figure 5: ACAC2024 Plenary Speakers** (in blue circles speakers invited by FunShield4Med project)



INVITED SPEAKERS



**Francesco Allegretti**

Privat Dozent, Technical University of Munich, Germany



**Kostas Biliaderis**

Department of Food Science and Technology, Agricultural School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece



**Niki Chondrogianni**

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**Nikos Thomaidis**

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**Figure 6. ACAC2024 Invited Speakers (in blue circles those invited by FunShield4Med project)**

**FunShield4Med Invited & Plenary Speakers:**

**Andreas Steffen**, Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Technical University of Dortmund, Germany "Our journey towards molecular single-photon sources – Fast and bright... but still Dark" (Plenary Session 4: INORGANIC CHEMISTRY)

**Dario Omanović**, Laboratory for Physical Chemistry of Traces, Centre for Marine and Environmental Research, Ruđer Bošković Institute, Croatia "Multi-Methodological study of trace metal speciation in marine waters" (Plenary Session ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMISTRY)

**Brianna Heazlewood**, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom "New methods for studying ions and radicals at low temperatures" (Plenary Session 6: PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY)

**Thomas Carell**, Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, Germany "Non-Canonical Nucleosides and Click Modification of Nucleic Acids" (Plenary Session 7: ORGANIC CHEMISTRY)

**Michal Bassani-Sternberg**, Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Switzerland "Antigen discovery for development of personalized cancer immunotherapy" (Plenary Session 3: BIOCHEMISTRY)

**FunShield4Med Invited Speakers under Plenary Session 5 “FOOD CHEMISTRY”** chaired by project’s team members Prof. C. Proestos (Leader, NKUA team) and Prof. V. Valdramidis (Member, NKUA team):

**Jianbo Xiao**, Adjunct Professor at Jinan University (China), Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Vigo, Spain, “Formation of nitrogenous flavonoid derivatives by reacting with amino acids” (Due an unanticipated event Prof. J. Xiao could not participate in person and sent 2 persons from his team to undertake his presentations: **Shiye Lin** who presented “The stability and degradation products of polyhydroxy flavonols in boiling water” and **Wenqi Huang** (PhD candidate), who presented “Stability and degradation mechanism of (-)-epicatechin in thermal processing”.

**Dejan Stojković**, Department of Plant Physiology, University of Belgrade, Serbia, “Mushrooms as natural resources of functional food and biologically active compounds”.

**Mirjana B. Pešić**, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, Serbia, “Goat milk proteins as a promising ingredient for functional food”.

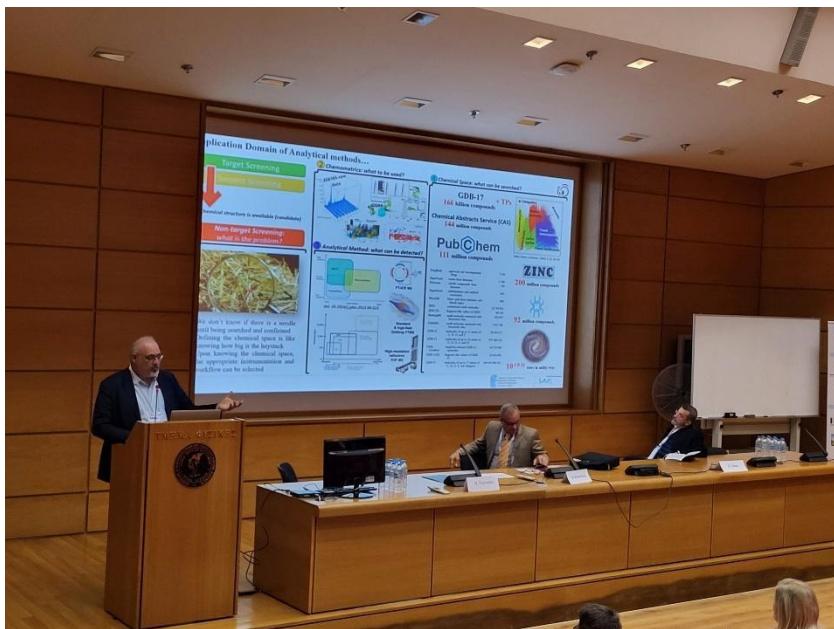
**Kostas Biliaderis**, Department of Food Science and Technology, Agricultural School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, “Cereal grain polysaccharides as functional food ingredients: structure-property relations”.

ACAC2024 1<sup>st</sup> day was on Wednesday 6 of November, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Aristotelis Congress Centre.



**Figure 7.** Prof. M. Graetzel on the podium during his lecture.

ACAC2024 commenced with a keynote lecture by Prof. M. Graetzel of Polytechnic School of Lausanne (EPFL), who presented on “Molecular Photovoltaics and the Stunning Rise of Perovskite Solar Cells” (Figure 7).



**Figure 8.** Prof. N. Thomaidis on the podium during his lecture.

Prof. N. Thomaidis of the Chemistry Department of NKUA delivered a lecture, further enriching the 1<sup>st</sup> day's sessions (Figure 8). The first plenary session on Analytical Chemistry concluded with a presentation by Spiros A. Pergantis.

The day continued with two plenary sessions covering topics in Environmental Chemistry (plenary session 2, invited plenary speaker from FunShield4Med was D. Omanović from Croatia) and Biochemistry (plenary session 3, invited

plenary speaker from FunShield4Med Michal Bassani-Sternberg from Switzerland) and with oral presentations taking place in between. 1<sup>st</sup> day of ACAC2024 ended with FunShield4Med dedicated Satellite Session on “Food Safety, Mycotoxins, & Climate change”. During this session, the coordinator of the project Dr. Pantelis Natskoulis with the contribution of Prof. Chiara Dall’Asta presented the project’s objectives, along with key research findings. A comprehensive overview of the educational activities carried out so far—including workshops, seminars, and summer schools—was also provided.



**Figure 9.** Prof. C. Proestos chairing (left) and on the podium with Prof. C. Dall’Asta (right) during the Satellite Session of FunShield4Med.

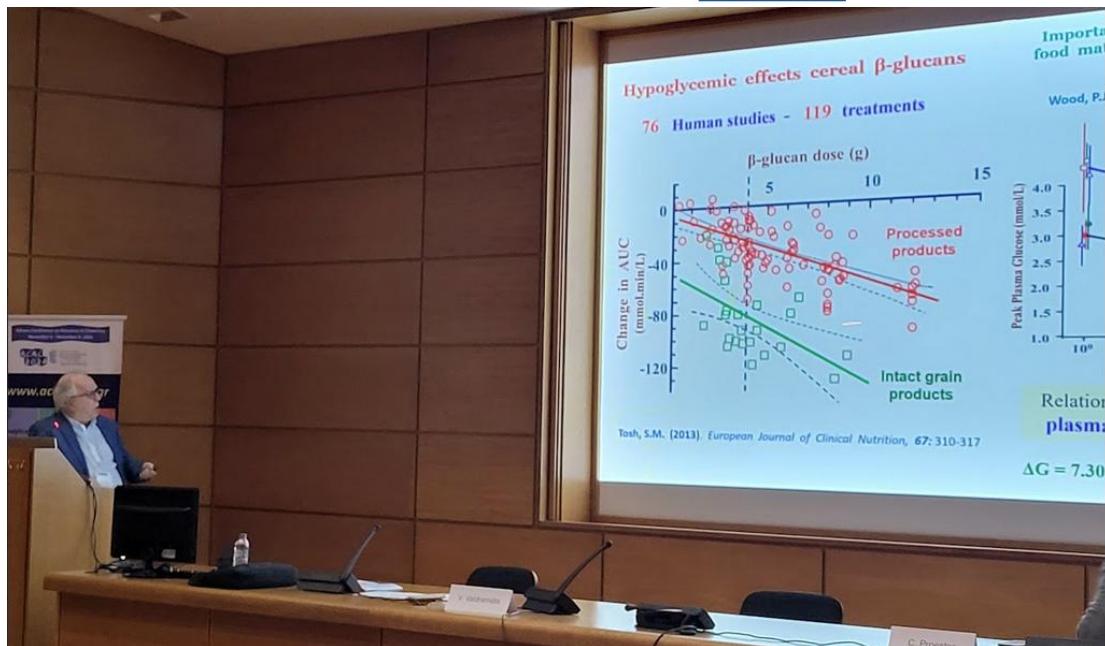
Prof. Charalambos Proestos (FunShield4Med NKUA Team Leader) served as the chairman of the project’s Satellite Session about “Food safety, Mycotoxins, & Climate Change” and Prof. C. Dall’Asta (online) of UNIPR contributed with a lecture about mycotoxins.

On the second day (Thursday 7 November) of ACAC2024, Sotirios Kiokias, PhD, European Research Executive Agency, Belgium opened the session with a talk on “EU research funding opportunities (Horizon Europe)/Marie-Sklodowska Curie Program (MSCA) with focus on Staff Exchanges Action”.

The conference then continued with the two more organized plenary sessions:

Plenary Session 4: Inorganic Chemistry, where Andreas Steffen from the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Technical University of Dortmund, Germany, as an invited speaker from FunShield4Med, spoke about “Our journey towards molecular single-photon sources – Fast and bright... but still Dark”.

Plenary Session 5: Food Chemistry. This session featured three plenary speakers, all of whom were invited by the FunShield4Med project.



**Figure 10.** Prof. Emer. K. Biliaderis (AUTH), invited speaker by FunShield4Med, presenting “Cereal grain polysaccharides as functional food ingredients: structure-property relations”.



**Figure 11.** Prof. V. Valdramidis (on the right) and Prof. C. Proestos (on the left) chairing Satellite Session of FunShield4Med.



**Figure 12.** Shiye Lin, Jinan University (China), Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Vigo, Spain presenting “The stability and degradation products of polyhydroxy flavonols in boiling water”.

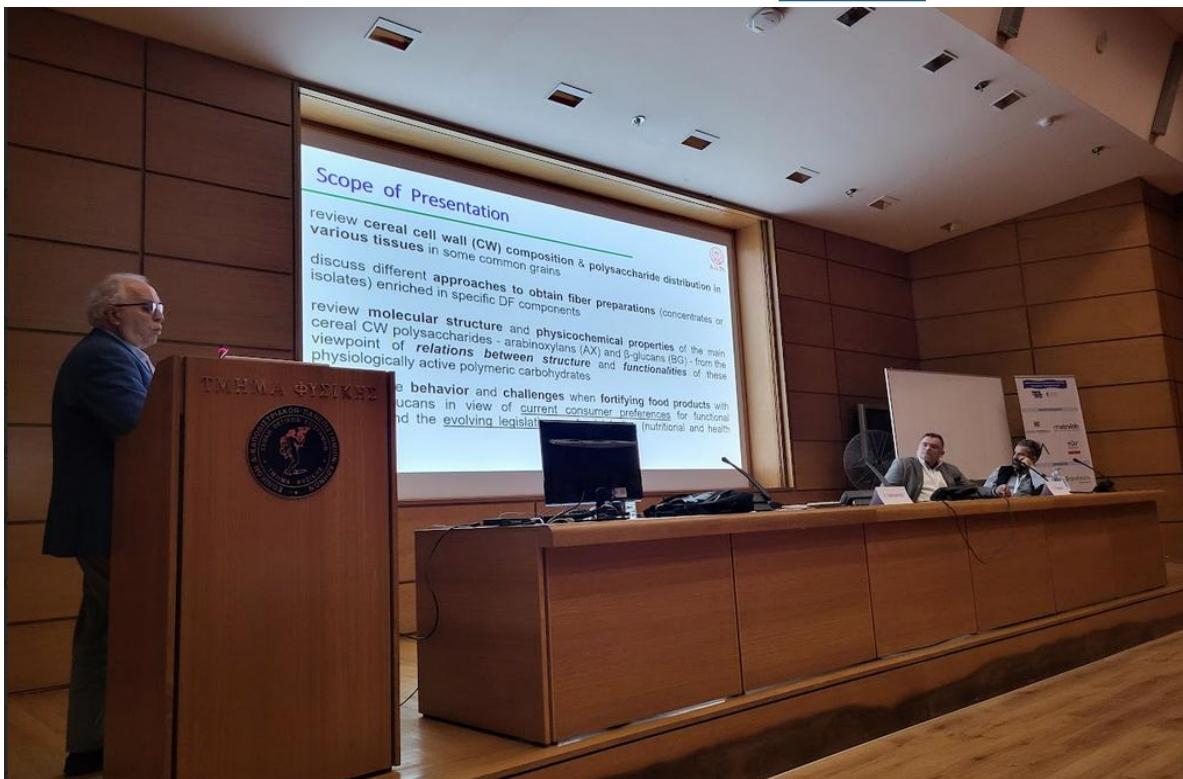


**Figure 13.** Dejan Stojković, invited speaker of FunShield4Med in the Food Chemistry Plenary Session (University of Belgrade, Serbia) presenting “Mushrooms as natural resources of functional food and biologically active compounds”.



**Figure 14.** Snapshots from oral presentations.

Food Chemistry section, Mr W. Huang Jinan University (China), Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Vigo, Spain presenting his work “Stability and degradation mechanism of (-)-epicatechin in thermal processing” (Figure 14, left), and SHIYE LIN, Jinan University (China), Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Vigo, Spain presenting her work about “The stability and degradation products of polyhydroxy flavonols in boiling water” (Figure 14, right).



**Figure 15.** Photo taken during Plenary Session 5: FOOD CHEMISTRY. Prof. Emer. K. Biliaderis (AUTH) as a speaker and the chairmen Prof. V. Valdramidis (on the right) and Prof. C. Proestos (on the left) from NKUA, Greece.

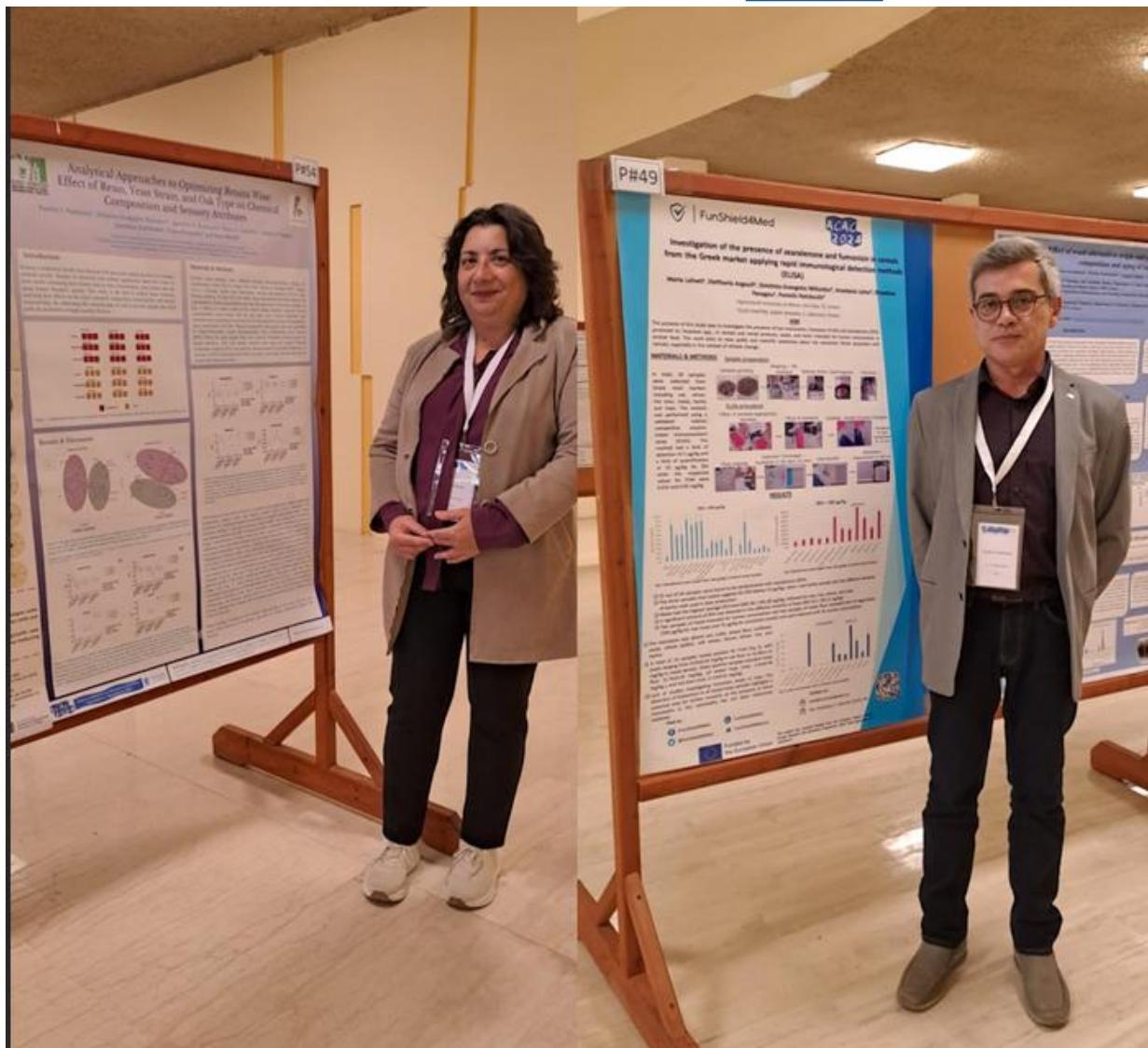
Plenary Session 6: PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY followed where the session committee consisted of D. Tzeli, G. Souliotis. Prof. Brianna Heazlewood, invited speaker from FunShield4Med (University of Liverpool, United Kingdom) gave a lecture about “New methods for studying ions and radicals at low temperatures”.

The final day of ACAC2024 (Friday 9 of November) began with Plenary Session 7 on Organic Chemistry, where Prof. Thomas Carell, invited speaker by FunShield4Med (Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, Germany) spoke about “Non-Canonical Nucleosides and Click Modification of Nucleic Acids”. The conference continued with Plenary Session 8 on Industrial Chemistry. Oral presentations related to these final sessions took place, leading up to the closing ceremony.



**Figure 16.** Photo taken during the closing ceremony of ACAC2024. Pictured are members of the Scientific and Organizing Committees along with conference participants and ESRs/ECSSs actively involved to organisation.

Throughout the three days of the ACAC2024, participants had the opportunity to explore the poster session exhibition and engage in networking.



**Figure 17.** FunShield4Med team presented 2 posters. Dr M. Metafa an optimization study on the unique TGI/TSG Greek wine “Retsina”, and Dr P. Natskoulis the results of Fumonisins & Zearalenone mycotoxins presence in cereals from Greek Market.



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## D4.2 - International conference for young scientists



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