The meeting started with an exciting translational session on the importance of non-coding RNAs in cardiovascular disease. Senior lectures on translation were given by Prof. Stefanie Dimmeler from Frankfurt and on premature cardiovascular aging by Prof. Vincente Andres from Madrid. In this session, Dr. Christian Bär – junior research group leader at the IMTTS presented data on IncRNA H19 and its role in pathological cardiac hypertrophy. The second session on cardiac cell plasticity had key contributions from Prof. Heikki Ruskoaho from Finland on cardiac reprogramming and from Dr. Robert Zweigerdt from Germany on cardiac stem cells for cardiac repair. All sessions included, in addition to the invited senior lectures, four oral 15min presentations selected from submitted abstracts. Amongst those, two two PhD students from the IMTTS were selected to presented their work: Ankita Garg on “High-throughput functional screen identifies miR-181a as a novel regulator of Aldosterone-MCR pathway” and Stevan Stojanovic on “Characteristics of cellular senescence of vascular smooth muscle cells”. In the afternoon a first highly interactive moderated poster session was held. With an outstanding keynote lecture given by Prof. Stefan Engelhardt from Munich on novel small and long noncoding RNAs the first meeting day was concluded.

The second day started with a session composed by the ESC Scientists of Tomorrow. This session was highly attended and focused on novel mechanisms and approaches about the failing heart. Additional topics of that day were on cardiovascular aging, the interaction of cancer and heart disease as well as on new insight about cardioprotection. The keynote lectures were given by Prof. Derek Yellon from the U.K. on ischemic/reperfusion injury and from Prof. Benjamin Prosser from USA on the plasticity of the cardiac cytoskeleton.

The final day of the meeting started with a session organized by the Heart Failure Specialists of Tomorrow (HFA). This session included 5 very translational and important talks ranging from the Athletes heart, to models of HFpEF, to orphan diseases such as Barth syndrome. The afternoon featured a session on cardiac autophagy and the 2rd moderated Poster session, which also was well attended. In addition there was an Award Session on Translational projects kindly supported by an educational grant by Novo Nordisk. One of five presentations was given by Fabian Kreutzer from the IMTTS, reporting on his PhD project “Treating cardiac fibrosis with natural compound-derived small molecules”. The meeting ended with the Award session, where the first poster price was given to Gloria Garrofolo, Milan, for her presentation on “Recruitment of advential myofibroblast-like cells in human saphenous vein graft remodeling is mediated by Thrombospondin 1” (Runners up: Deli Zhang
from Amsterdam and Laura Santer from the IMTTS for her poster entitled “Circ24 regulates cardiac hypertrophy”). The First Award for the Translational Session was given to Loubna Laib, Toulouse (France), for her presentation on the role of the chromatin remodeler JARID18 in gene reprogramming during cardiac hypertrophy. Congratulations to the Awardees.

The fruitful meeting was closed on Saturday evening and was a big success for both WGs!

Lunch break at the venue, San Marcellino Monastery
The congress office
San Marcellino Monastery

Prof. Thum with Dr. Christian Bär, junior research group leader at the IMTTS who gave a talk on “Long non-coding RNA H19 controls pathological cardiac hypertrophy” in the opening session of the meeting
Joint Chairs of WG on Myocardial Function and Cellular Biology of the Heart during their speech at the congress dinner

Poster Session on Saturday afternoon
Technical support to the presentations

Financial support
Pre-identified posters that were eligible for the poster award after discussion in the moderated poster session.