It is actually a true honor to be selected for this traveling fellowship, which provides the unique lifetime experience to the participants. We were selected from different European countries (Croatia, France and Italy) to travel to the USA, and we were so lucky to have Prof Niek Van Dijk as a Godfather for our journey.

6/21/13 - New York City
Hospital for Special Surgery / Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center
Hosts: Jo Hannafin, MD, Scott Rodeo MD
Host: William Levine, MD

New York City gave a welcome to the ESSKA/AOSSM traveling fellows with an amazing surgical and scientific program. We had a chance to visit the Hospital for Special Surgery with Dr. Hannafin and Dr Rodeo, where our hosts showed us various surgeries such as: arthroscopic shoulder cuff repair, biceps tendon tenodesis, MPFL, pediatric and adult ACL reconstructions with different techniques, performed by Dr. Cordasco, Dr. Greene and Dr Marx. During our visit to Presbyterian Hospital at Columbia University we met Prof Bigliani and with Dr Levine we had the chance to see a shoulder arthroscopic calcification removal and learned how important is to perform an X-Ray immediately before surgery, due to the
possibility of spontaneous resolution of the calcification. Furthermore at the Columbia University, Dr. Ahmad performed a reconstruction of the medial elbow ligament with the use of the gracilis tendon, which is a very rare procedure in Europe, because this kind of lesions are primarily associated with baseball practice.

The social program was absolutely amazing, also. Our hosts from Presbyterian Hospital took us to the unforgettable NY Yankees baseball game and to a dinner in Quest Restaurant, at the end. Next day started with the visit to the 9/11 Memorial, then a walk on the High-line Park and finished with a wonderful sailing on America’s Cup boat around Manhattan toward to the Statue of Liberty. Our dinner, in such impressive location as the New York Athletic Club, completed the day with HSS’s hosts. In the late evening, finally we went with Michael Mc Brayer from DJO to Time Square to end up this evening and pledge to the traveling fellowship.

While staying in New York, we enjoyed Central Park, located just around the corner of our Carlyle Hotel, especially during our morning “runs”. Some free time (very few according to the busy schedules) allowed us to visit Frick collection and Museum of Natural History.

6/26/13 - St. Louis, Missouri
Washington University School of Medicine
Hosts: Robert Brophy MD, Rick Wright MD

It was sad to leave Manhattan, but Saint Louis gave us a warm welcome. Dr. Brophy was a wonderful host to us and with him and Dr. Matava we had a chance to see 2 very interesting osteochondral allografting procedures of the knee and one of them was particularly performed for a very large OCD of the medial femoral condyle, which required 2 plugs. A fixation of a non-detached OCD in a 15 years old patient and a revision of ACL upon re-rupture was also performed. We were also amazed by the visit to the Research facilities of the Washington University, were hundreds of scientists, engineers and biologists work together and gave us presentations regarding the genetic base of the osteoarthritis which may help, in the future predicting the risk of osteoarthritis in the different subjects and in choosing personalized techniques for cartilage repair. It was awesome to have the chance to visit the Rams Football club training camp and to interact with their athletic trainer, who is the first line care for the player, by performing physiotherapies for the player, also.
The visit to the Saint Louis Museum of History and Cathedral was unexpected and surprising. The Cathedral is a masterpiece of neo-Byzantine architecture, which truly deserves a stop. Of course, we were amazed by the visit to the Saint Louis Arch followed by huge frozen custard at Ted Drew’s on the historical Route 66. We enjoyed very much amazing Bourbon testing at Dr. Wright’s house (pre dinner!!!) and after that, we went to the remarkable concert in St. Louis Symphony Hall with the most happy mind disposition.

6/29/13 - New Orleans, Louisiana
Tulane University
Hosts: Felix (Buddy) Savoie MD, Michael O’Brien MD

As soon as we came to New Orleans we had an immediate taste of the famous Mardi Gras and most of all, an emotional and scary, very close meeting with an alligator during the swamp tour. After that we had a very interesting scientific session with Dr. Felix Savoie (Buddy), fellows and residents where we exchanged our scientific presentations and ideas. At the evening, we went to the French quarter and enjoyed some funky jazz in Frenchman street, which was awesome. The day after, we splitted in two groups to see, either shoulder and elbow procedures with Buddy, or foot and ankle surgeries with Dr. Rodriguez. While Nieck and Francesca experienced Chevron procedures for the hallux valgus correction, ankle arthrodesis, ankle scopes with tibial plafond cartilage lesion treated by microfractures and a Jones procedure for cavus foot correction, performed by Dr. Rodriguez, Nik and Nico observed a medial elbow ligament repair in a young baseball pitcher, a very nice full Bankart repair from posterior to anterior, a third time surgery of massive cuff repair which doesn’t look reparable but at the end nicely re-attached to the footprint and covered by an artificial patch (all arthroscopic) and an arthroscopic repair of an HAGL lesion performed by our second host Dr. O’Brien.
A dinner was a true experience of the bajou food (which is, in Francesca opinion one of the best in the world) at Clancy’s restaurant.
Boulder came as a surprise because of its gorgeous landscapes. At first we visited the huge facility of the University of Colorado with the labs of bioengineering and sports physiology, and upon our scientific presentations we had the chance to see a hip arthroscopy in a young athlete with labrum detachment, performed by Dr. Mei Dan. During a day we had a possibility to chat with Dr. Faegan, one of the legendary Godfathers of this Fellowship.

The evening program was an outstanding concert by Michael Franti at the Red Rocks amphitheatre with Dr. McCarty and his wife Miriam and resulted in an unforgettable experience where we enjoyed good music, friendship and dancing in one of the most amazing locations of the entire world.

The very morning of the Independence Day, the fellows said Goodbye to Colorado from an air balloon and left, after that, for the New Mexico.

7/4/13 - Albuquerque, New Mexico
University of New Mexico
Hosts: Bob Schenk MD, Daniel Wascher, MD
Our program in Albuquerque started with a traditional 4th July BBQ at Dan’s home with all colleagues and their families. The hospitality of Bob Schenk and Dan Wascher has been amazing and they truly made us feel at home for all of our stay with them. We had a very interesting surgical program with them, having the chance to see an ACL revision, a PCL reconstruction by Achilles tendon allograft, and an amazing poster-lateral corner reconstruction by hamstring tendon. Further scientific conference resulted in a very interesting afternoon, where both, the local and the traveling fellows, gave presentations and exchanged ideas. Saturday was all dedicated to the visit of the Tent Rocks Park in the territory of the Cochiti Reservate, relax at 10000 waves spa (awesome), lovely walk and dinner in a city of Santa Fe. The farewell to our hosts was during the morning, after a huge Mexican style breakfast, when the fellows left for Chicago, their final destination.

7/7/13 - Chicago, Illinois
Chicago Orthopaedic Sports Medicine Specialists
University of Illinois, University of Chicago, Rush Medical Center, Northwestern Orthopaedic Institute, Northshore University Health Systems, Loyola University
Host: Mark Hutchinson, MD

In Chicago we immediately taste a deep dish Chicago pizza with Dr. Hutchinson. Next day, we experienced a wonderful cadaver training session in the AAOS Orthopedic Learning Center, which is an amazing facility, where personalized practical teachings were given to each of us on knee, foot and ankle surgical practices. Evening scientific meeting leaded by Dr. Tonino was another great experience at remarkable Chicago’s Steak House. The following day we were splited again in two groups, either to assist at surgeries at Rush Hospital or at Hip clinic with Dr. Nho.
Finally, at Northshore University, we had the chance to participate in meniscal transplant procedure on the cadaver with Dr. Koh and we visited their Research labs. One of the most amazing laboratories, among so many highly technological centers, was the small Basic arthroscopic skill center created by Dr. Sweeny. Once he was retired, this wonderful professor created a lab, with a small amount of money, but with a lot of fantasy, competence and love for teaching, where the residents can take advantage of his experience and his advices.
Glass blowing was the new fantastic experience and resulted in a souvenir of our lifetime Fellowship. Our evening finished with US sports classic - Chicago Cubs baseball game.

7/10/13 – 7/14/13 - Chicago, Illinois
AOSSM Annual Meeting

Next five days we spent in a company with colleagues from all over the world, enjoying well-organized AOSSM Conference with highly interested Instructional Courses. During the evenings we were warmly welcomed at President’s Dinner at the Art Institute, we spent a lovely dinner with Prof. Fu and at the end, as a highlight of our Fellowship, we were announced as a new members at the official meeting of Magellan Society.

Hospitality in all centers has been beyond the expectations. We learned procedures that will affect our practice in the future and came back home with new energies and ideas, for sure.
We think that a key point of our fellowship was to have as a Godfather Prof Niek van Dijk who was so energetically and eager to take and give the best of himself in every moment of the day. At each stop he gave us “airport lectures” to train us on the ankle arthroscopy while waiting for our flights. And at dinner he gave us and our hosts a wise little story, rich of good sense and sense of humor. And each time a different message. In order to prepare us for “academic leadership” as he used to say. We know that many of his teachings will help us in our future practice, as well as in daily life. The chemistry between the members of the group has been so good that we all truly feel that this has been a life changing experience. The friendship between all of us and our hosts is going to be a relationship for life. All of this could not be possible without a help of Mrs. Czech, remarkable coordinator of this Fellowship.

In summary we believe that this experience is something that have to be part of the life of all those young surgeons and scientists who are planning to have active roles in the scientific society…and last but not least, it is a lot of fun…

ESSKA and AOSSM sincerely thank our sponsor, DJO, for supporting the scientific segments of this fellowship programme.