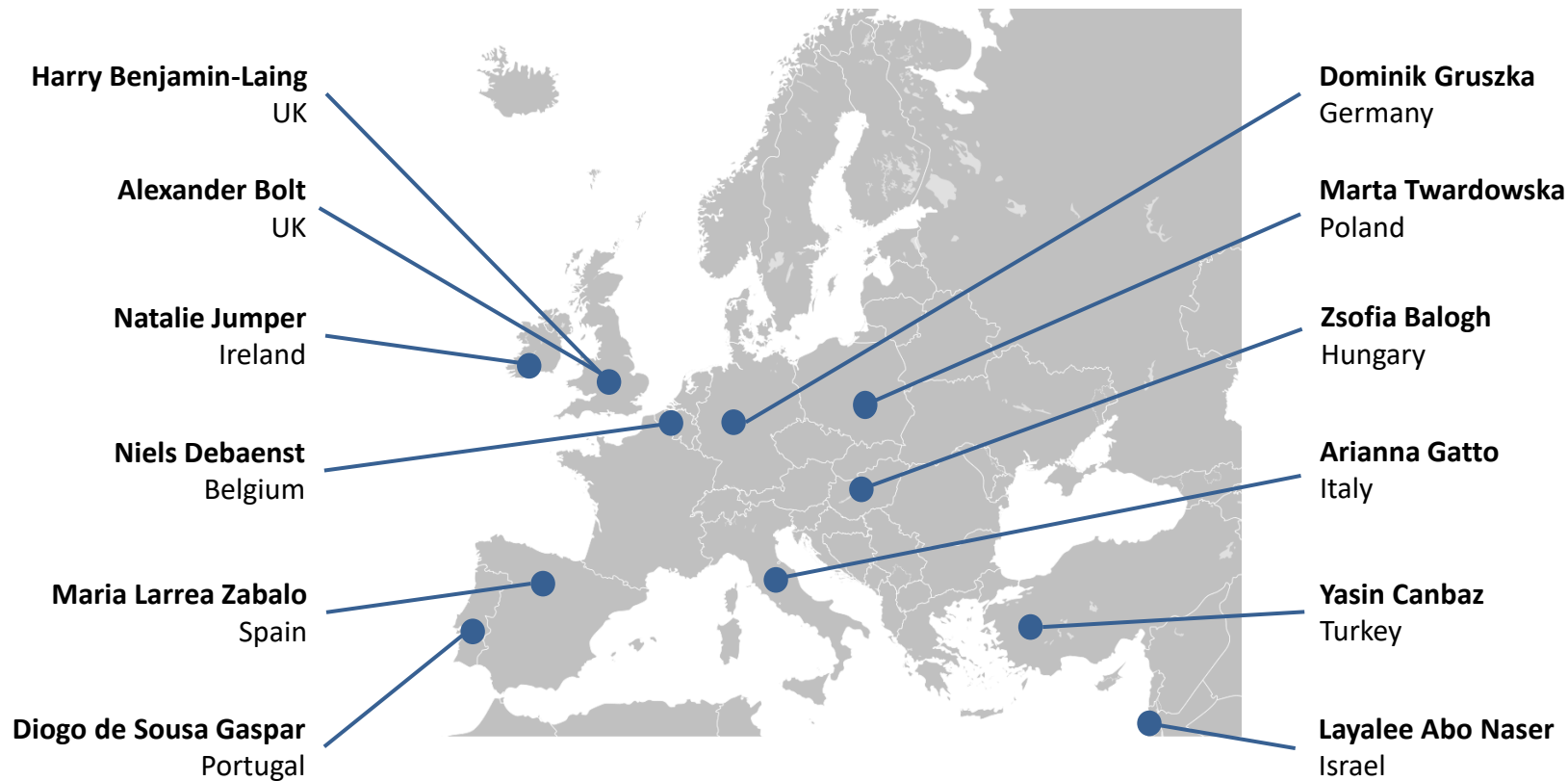
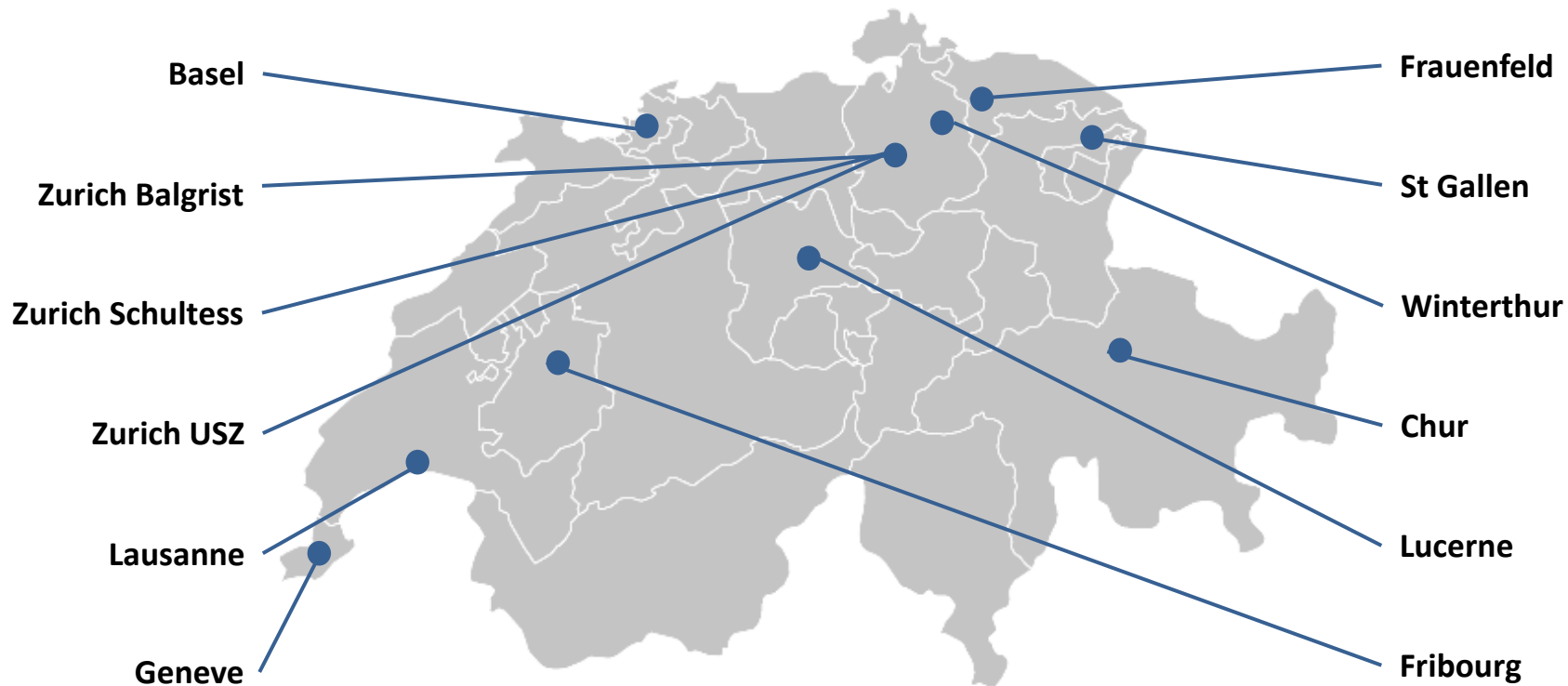


FESSH/SSCM 2026 CONGRESS FELLOWSHIP FELLOWS



FESSH/SSCM 2026 CONGRESS FELLOWSHIP CENTERS



REPORT – LAYALEE ABO NASER

I was honored to be chosen as one of the fellows for this great experience. I was really lucky to have Natalie Jumper as my partner for the fellowship, we got along from the first moment and enjoyed our time together. We were assigned to visit Geneva for the first week and Basel for the second week.

Week 1 – Geneva Clinique de la Main

I arrived to Geneva on Monday morning, we met our host in Geneva, Flavien Mauler, we were given a tour in the hospital and then we joined Flavien for the consultations. During the week in Geneva, we saw a variety of elective hand surgery, I saw for the first time carpal tunnel and trigger finger release with the SpireCut knife under ultrasound guidance, which I found really interesting. Another interesting Case that we saw was a De-fusion of a trapezio-metacarpal joint that was done 20 years ago, and implantation of a prosthesis in the joint. The team in Geneva consisted of 6 consultants and 2 residents, all of them were very kind to share their knowledge with us, we had a nicely arranged social program, including dinner with the team and traditional Swiss fondue. And they were very kind to purchase us tickets for the Patek-Philip museum.

In addition, Flavien was very kind to share his knowledge in Ultrasound with us by giving us a mini-workshop on our last day in Geneva.



Week 2 – Basel university hospital

Monday was an official holiday in Europe, so we started our week in Basel university hospital on Tuesday, we were joined by another fellow, Macarena Vizcay, which was the research fellow in Basel. The team consisted of 4 consultants and 4 residents, the cases that we saw in Basel included elective hand surgery as well, but also a lot of trauma cases, staged revisions and complex congenital cases.

The team organized especially interesting and challenging cases for us to see in theatre during our stay, which was very kind of them to do. We were also invited to join the whole team for dinner on one of the evenings.



Week 3 – pre-congress and congress

An educational program was arranged by Saskia Kamphuis and the organizing team in Basel for the last week of the fellowship.

On Sunday, we met all the other fellows on the group, and we got to know each other and share our experiences from the different centers.

On Monday we had a Medartis factory tour, it was really interesting to see how the implants we use in our operations are made, and how they are meticulously examined after every manufacturing stage. After the factory tour we had a sightseeing tour in with an emphasis on the medical history of Basel which I enjoyed very much. And then we had a fellow teacher dinner in a nice restaurant.

On Tuesday we had an educational morning, I enjoyed the Nerve talk very much, but I think that the lectures were a bit too long and it might have been nicer if it was an interactive discussion instead of lectures. Afterwards, we went to the Basel university for a cadaver session.

On Wednesday, the FESSH meeting started with the educational afternoon, I enjoyed the papers and discussions presented in the meeting, and I also took part as an instructor in the fracture workshop on Thursday.

I would like to say thank you again for giving me the opportunity to participate in this fellowship, I enjoyed every moment, I had the chance to learn from other people and also share my knowledge with others, and most importantly, I made a lot of new friends from all over Europe which I hope will last for a long time.

REPORT – ZSÓFIA BALOGH

The three-week Congress Fellowship in Switzerland in 2026 was a very valuable professional and personal learning experience for me. The international setting made the experience especially meaningful, as I had the opportunity to meet colleagues, make new friends, and gain a broader understanding of professional practices beyond my home country.



The first week we spent in Zurich, where we were given the opportunity to gain insight into the close cooperation between three clinics and how they manage their different profiles. We spent time at the USZ Klinik, the Schultess Klinik and also at Balgrist University Hospital. This experience allowed us to observe how different medical teams work together in a coordinated and highly professional way to ensure a well-rounded training for their residents. We could see how well-organized clinical processes contribute to a high standard

of treatment. The week in Zurich was especially inspiring because it demonstrated the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and showed us examples of patient care delivered at an exceptionally high level. We had the opportunity to observe lots of interesting cases in the OR, many arthroplasties and nerve transfers and even see the department for 3D planning.

During the second week, we stayed in Frauenfeld, where we had the chance to observe the well-organized work of a smaller and more familiar team. Compared with the larger clinical environment in Zurich, Frauenfeld offered a more personal atmosphere, where close cooperation and direct communication played an important role in everyday practice. It was impressive to see how efficiently the team worked together while maintaining a friendly and supportive environment. In addition to the professional programme, we also had the opportunity to try urban golf together, which was a memorable shared activity and helped strengthen the informal connections within the group.



On the third week in Basel, we participated in a range of congress-related activities, including lectures, workshops, presentations, and professional discussions. These events allowed me to become familiar with current topics, innovative approaches, and practical solutions presented by experienced professionals.

One of the most important aspects of the fellowship was the opportunity to meet participants and professionals from different backgrounds. Informal conversations, group activities, and networking moments contributed greatly to my understanding of international collaboration. The Swiss environment also provided an inspiring context, as the country is known for its organisation, precision, and high professional standards.

Overall, the three-week fellowship in Switzerland was an enriching experience that strengthened both my professional knowledge and my personal skills. It helped me develop a wider

FESSH/SSCM 2026 CONGRESS FELLOWSHIP REPORTS

international perspective and motivated me to apply the knowledge and experience gained during the programme in my future studies and professional work. I met very interesting people and, more so, had the privilege of becoming friends with some of them. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Congress Fellowship, and I believe the lessons learned over these three weeks will have a lasting impact on my development.

REPORT – HARRY BENJAMIN-LAING

INTRODUCTION

This FESSH-funded fellowship comprised visits to three leading Swiss centres of hand and wrist surgery, anchored by attendance at the FESSH 2026 Congress. The experience provided concentrated exposure to specialist techniques, substantive clinical discussion with surgeons of international standing, and the opportunity to compare approaches with peers from across Europe — reinforcing and meaningfully refining my clinical decision-making throughout.

CHUR — KANTONSSPITAL GRAUBÜNDEN

Mr Mathias Hafeli leads a practice encompassing advanced reconstructive carpal surgery. The visit focused on lunate replacement for Kienbock's disease — a condition with no clear consensus treatment — and discussion of his implant selection rationale, long-term outcomes, and post-operative protocols. I return with a more structured and confident framework for counselling patients and selecting treatment for this challenging condition.

ZURICH — BALGRIST UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Mr Andreas Schweizer's use of patient-specific 3D printed osteotomy guides for distal radius malunion correction was among the most technically impressive practice observed during the fellowship. Seeing the full workflow from CT planning to intraoperative execution, and discussing the iterative refinements his unit has made, gave me both an appreciation of the technique's capabilities and a realistic understanding of the infrastructure required — an area I intend to develop. Time with

Ms Lisa Reisser and Mr Mauro Maniglio added further depth through broad clinical discussion on carpal instability and scaphoid reconstruction. The fellowship also included a dedicated upper limb ultrasound course at Balgrist, providing structured hands-on training in point-of-care musculoskeletal USS that will have immediate application in outpatient practice.

ZURICH — SCHULTHESS KLINIK

Mr Stephan Schindele offered an exceptional discussion encompassing both total wrist arthroplasty and thumb CMCJ arthroplasty — covering patient selection, the arthroplasty versus trapeziectomy debate, implant longevity, and complication management, informed by one of the largest followed cohorts in Europe. The visit also included time in the Schulthess research facility, headed by

Dr Miriam Marks, whose team's work spans biomechanical testing, outcomes data, and translational research that directly informs clinical practice. The seamless integration of research and surgery at Schulthess was genuinely impressive and a valuable benchmark.

ZURICH — UNIVERSITÄTSSPITAL Zurich

Dr Olga Politikou provided a thoughtful conclusion to the fellowship, with discussion ranging across ligament reconstruction evidence, outcomes measurement, and the challenge of applying population-level data to individual patients.

FESSH 2026 CONGRESS & REFLECTION

The Congress brought together hand surgeons from across Europe, providing formal scientific exchange on wrist instability, scaphoid reconstruction, emerging arthroplasty data, and patient-specific instrumentation, alongside the invaluable informal exchange between sessions. Meeting peers from Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Spain, Italy, and Sweden reinforced that the challenges of hand surgery practice are largely

FESSH/SSCM 2026 CONGRESS FELLOWSHIP REPORTS

shared — and that comparing how experienced colleagues navigate uncertainty is one of the most effective means of refining one's own judgement. This fellowship has produced tangible and lasting improvements to my clinical decision-making, and I am grateful to FESSH and to all the host surgeons for their extraordinary generosity.



REPORT – ALEXANDER BOLT

I had the privilege of being part of the travelling fellowship in Switzerland this year, where I visited two Swiss hand centres followed by the FESSH congress in Basel. I spent my first week at Lausanne University Hospital in the CHUV and my second week in Fribourg at HFR – Fribourg Cantonal Hospital.

The CHUV is in Lausanne but during this first week I stayed in Renen at the home of Dr Wehrli with his family. I saw a variety of procedures including an index metacarpal base vascularised bone graft and arthroscopic TFCC repair. I had not seen the index metacarpal vascularised bone graft before. I learned it is a versatile graft with a long pedicle that I would consider performing in the appropriate clinical context. The arthroscopic TFCC repair was performed dry, which is how I perform a wrist arthroscopy. However, a 20ml syringe was used to flush the joint when needed and I was informed that this technique can be used with a shaver. Traditionally I was taught to transition to wet arthroscopy when using a shaver, which is generally not a smooth transition. I am going to trial this technique in my arthroscopic practice.

I attended outpatient clinics with Dr Wherli and Dr Christen, which prompted discussions of interesting cases and clinical examination. These discussions continued into the evenings over dinner and in the morning over breakfast with Dr Wherli, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I came away from Lausanne with new ideas about surgical practice and questions, which as a hand surgery community some we are still debating in the literature and at congresses.

After our time in Lausanne, Dr Wherli invited both of the Lausanne travelling fellows to his chalet in the Alps for the weekend. We were able to continue our discussions around hand surgery and different practices in our countries whilst enjoying walking in breathtaking scenery.



FESSH/SSCM 2026 CONGRESS FELLOWSHIP REPORTS

The second week of the fellowship was in Fribourg which is on the border of the French and German speaking parts of Switzerland, so all staff had on their ID badges flags of languages in which they were fluent. The hand surgeons both worked within the orthopaedic department and I attended 3 different hospitals with exposure to theatre and outpatient clinics. Ultrasound was used in the outpatient clinic as an aid to diagnosis and to explain to patients their pathology, which would be something I would ideally incorporate into my practice, but time constraints in the NHS make this a challenge. In theatre I observed 1st CMCJ Arthroplasty, fracture fixation and fusion procedures, where I learned some technical tips that I will build into my surgical practice.

The third week all the travelling fellows met in Basel, it was great to finally meet everyone in person. We discussed our experience of the fellowship and our experience of hand surgery in our home countries. We all attended a tour of the Medartis factory, a walking tour of Basel, an educational session and a cadaveric dissection session prior to the congress. At the congress there were many excellent sessions but the sessions on 1st CMCJ arthroplasty, Keinböcks & wrist arthroplasty were very insightful. The congress gave me the opportunity to see old friends but also build relationships with colleagues, which was invaluable.

The travelling fellowship was an exceptional experience, because of the people I met and the discussions we had. It's an experience I shared with some incredible people and has enabled me to build relationships that will be with me throughout my career. We finished the fellowship together as travelling fellows floating down the Rhine with our FESSH wicklefisch, which was a perfect way to end an incredible experience.



REPORT – YASIN CANBAZ

The 2026 FESSH Fellowship Programme was one of the most rewarding professional experiences of my career. Beyond improving my surgical knowledge, it allowed me to observe different philosophies of hand surgery, build lasting international friendships, and gain a broader perspective on what it means to be part of the European hand surgery community.

My name is Dr. Yasin, and I am a hand surgeon from Türkiye. I work in the Department of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery at Başakşehir Çam and Sakura City Hospital in Istanbul, a 2,600-bed tertiary public hospital. Our department is among the largest plastic surgery training centres in the country, currently training almost seventy plastic surgery residents. When I applied for the fellowship, my goals were straightforward: to improve my clinical practice, observe experienced hand surgeons in their own environments, and establish international professional connections. Looking back, the programme exceeded every one of those expectations. One of the greatest advantages of the fellowship was sharing the experience with another fellow, Dr. Alex, an orthopaedic hand surgeon from Wales, United Kingdom. Throughout the programme, we continuously discussed surgical cases, compared our experiences, exchanged ideas, and reflected on different treatment strategies. Those conversations became an invaluable part of the learning process and gradually developed into a genuine friendship.

The programme began with one week at CHUV in Lausanne, followed by another week at HFR in Fribourg. In both centres, I had the privilege of participating in outpatient clinics and observing a wide range of surgical procedures. Watching internationally respected hand surgeons manage complex cases, communicate with patients, and approach surgical decision-making was just as educational as learning new operative techniques. Indeed, I returned home with several practical ideas that I could immediately incorporate into my own practice. In fact, within days of returning to Türkiye, I successfully applied one of the techniques (<https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm13144214>) I had learned during the fellowship in the treatment of two of my own patients.

Lausanne offered something even more unique. I stayed at Dr. Thierry Christen's house throughout the week (which was a great surprise for me) and my colleague Dr. Alex and I had the extraordinary privilege of spending the weekend at Dr. Laurent Wehrli's house in the Swiss Alps. This hospitality transformed the fellowship into something far beyond an observership. Living alongside our hosts allowed us to appreciate not only how they operate, but also how they organise their daily lives, balance family life with professional responsibilities, and maintain their enthusiasm for surgery after many years in practice. Those experiences were genuinely inspiring and encouraged me to reflect on the kind of surgeon—and person—I hope to become. Dr. Thierry Christen impressed me with his remarkable calmness, patience, and precision. Watching him work felt almost like observing the mechanism of a Swiss watch—everything was thoughtful, efficient, and perfectly timed. Equally importantly, he is a devoted husband and father whose professionalism is matched by his kindness and humility. Dr. Laurent Wehrli possesses a different but equally inspiring personality. His passion for nature, his curiosity, and his willingness to teach made every conversation enjoyable. Whether discussing surgery, outdoor activities, or everyday life, he always found a way to make learning feel effortless. Both surgeons also demonstrated how maintaining an active lifestyle can become an integral part of a fulfilling career. Most importantly, both families welcomed us with extraordinary warmth. From the very beginning, we felt less like visitors and more like longtime friends. Their generosity is something I will never forget, and I sincerely hope to welcome them to Istanbul in the near future.

FESSH/SSCM 2026 CONGRESS FELLOWSHIP REPORTS

During my second week in Fribourg, I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Thomas, Dr. Andreas, and their excellent team across the three HFR campuses. Once again, I observed numerous operations and outpatient consultations, each providing valuable opportunities for discussion and learning. What particularly impressed me in Fribourg was Dr. Andreas' remarkable enthusiasm for teaching. Every patient, every operation, and every clinical discussion became an opportunity to explain, question, and educate. His energy was infectious and reminded me that excellent surgeons never stop teaching. Despite an exceptionally busy schedule, Dr. Thomas was equally generous with his time. He ensured that our visit was both productive and enjoyable, and his kindness made us feel immediately welcome within the department.

The final week brought us to Basel for the FESSH Congress, where the atmosphere changed from intimate fellowship training to the excitement of an international scientific meeting. We finally met the other fellows, attended outstanding educational sessions delivered by leading European hand surgeons, visited industry partners, and even shared the unforgettable experience of swimming in the Rhine River. The week became even more meaningful because ten colleagues from my own department travelled to Basel to attend the congress. Together we presented eight oral presentations, making the meeting particularly memorable for our entire team. Throughout the fellowship, I kept a detailed handwritten journal. Every evening I recorded the operations I had observed, interesting clinical cases, technical pearls, and ideas for my own future practice. Looking back, this was one of the best decisions I made during the programme. Writing everything down transformed daily observations into lasting knowledge, and I would strongly encourage future fellows to do the same.

Perhaps the most important lesson I learned is that this fellowship is not simply about learning new surgical techniques. It is about understanding different ways of thinking, observing how experienced surgeons approach complex problems, and discovering how excellence is achieved in different healthcare systems. Equally valuable are the people you meet. The fellowship introduces you to colleagues who share the same passion for hand surgery and the same commitment to lifelong learning. It reminds you that there is an international community of remarkably talented, generous, and supportive surgeons who are genuinely willing to share their experience with others.

If you are considering applying for the FESSH Fellowship Programme, I would wholeheartedly encourage you to do so. The knowledge you gain is important, but the perspectives, friendships, and professional relationships you build may prove to be even more valuable throughout your career.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the FESSH team, the FESSH Education Committee, and the Turkish Society for Surgery of the Hand for making this opportunity possible. Their encouragement, organisation, and commitment to education made this fellowship an unforgettable experience. I feel honoured to have been part of this programme and hope to remain an active member of the FESSH community for many years to come.

FSSH/SSCM 2026 CONGRESS FELLOWSHIP REPORTS



REPORT – DIOGO DE SOUSA GASPAR

As part of the FESSH Fellowship Programme, I had the privilege of visiting two renowned Hand Surgery centres in Switzerland, located in Winterthur and Lucerne. This fellowship represented an outstanding opportunity for both professional and academic development, allowing me to gain insight into different clinical and surgical approaches, discuss complex cases, and further deepen my knowledge in the field of Hand Surgery.

I was warmly welcomed by both departments and their teams, who showed remarkable openness and generosity in sharing their expertise, experience, and daily clinical practice. The opportunity to observe their work closely and engage in meaningful discussions created an exceptionally stimulating learning environment.

Beyond the excellent educational and scientific experience, I also had the chance to discover some of Switzerland's unique and breathtaking landscapes. The country's natural beauty added a memorable personal dimension to this fellowship and made the experience even more rewarding.

The fellowship concluded with attendance at the FESSH Congress in Basel. The congress offered a highly stimulating scientific programme, featuring excellent presentations, insightful lectures, and discussions on current developments in Hand Surgery. It also provided valuable networking opportunities, enabling fellows and participants from different countries to exchange ideas, build professional relationships, and strengthen international collaboration.

I would particularly like to highlight the importance of developing and maintaining the FESSH Fellows community. Creating strong connections between fellows from across Europe is a significant investment in the future of our specialty, fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and future professional partnerships.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Hand Surgery departments in Winterthur and Lucerne for their hospitality, kindness, and commitment to education. I am also deeply grateful to FESSH for providing this unique opportunity. The fellowship has been an enriching experience both professionally and personally, and I am confident that it will have a lasting positive impact on my future practice and career in Hand Surgery.

REPORT – NIELS DEBAENST

Week 1: Kantonsspital Winterthur (KSW)

Our immersion in the Swiss healthcare system commenced with a warm welcome at the Kantonsspital Winterthur by our host, Dr. Giuseppe Broccoli, and the local hand and plastic surgery team.

The clinical schedule was highly productive, balancing outpatient consultations with complex operative cases. KSW boasts an impressive infrastructural setup and great clinical organization, which was mirrored in their structured morning rounds and dedicated teaching moments. In the operating theater, we were able to observe and discuss a wide variety of procedures, including: two radial forearm flaps for soft tissue reconstruction, multiple acute hand trauma cases and advanced wrist arthroscopy cases.

Beyond the scrub sink, the team graciously integrated us into their department culture. An evening social visit to a local Irish pub provided an excellent, informal setting to discuss the nuances of training and clinical practice variations between our respective home countries.



Week 2: Luzerner Kantonsspital (LUKS)

The second week took us to Central Switzerland. Because the week began with a Swiss public holiday, we had the wonderful opportunity to explore the beautiful city of Lucerne, the *Vierwaldstättersee* (Lake Lucerne), and the surrounding mountains.

On Tuesday we were invited to visit the renowned Schweizer Paraplegiker-Zentrum (SPZ) in Nottwil. We observed intricate tendon and nerve transfers performed by their dedicated tetra hand team led by Dr. Silvia Schibli. Following surgery, we were given a comprehensive tour of the specialized facility.

The remainder of the week was spent embedded with the hand and plastic surgery team at LUKS in Lucerne under the leadership of Dr. Urs Hug. The department's academic framework was incredibly robust, featuring structured case discussions in the morning, a dedicated "Green's hour," and interdisciplinary teaching sessions with the musculoskeletal radiology team.

Surgically, we observed the management of diverse trauma and elective pathology, including a highly complex **lunate dislocation with an associated distal radius impaction fracture**, handled expertly by Prof. Hug and his team.

The hospitality in Lucerne was unforgettable, starting with welcome drinks at a local brewery and concluding at the end of the week with an outdoor apéro and dinner at the Grand Casino, offering panoramic views of the lake alongside the entire surgical team.



Week 3: FESSH Congress Basel

The final week brought all twelve clinical fellows and two research fellows together in Basel, transitioning the fellowship from institutional observerships to centralized academic training. The academic program began with an insightful tour of the Medartis manufacturing facility and a medical sightseeing tour of Basel. This was followed by a rigorous teaching day including a cadaveric dissection course.

Following the instructional courses, we attended the largest FESSH Congress to date. The three-day scientific program was filled to the brim with scientific paper presentations, keynote lectures, intensive panel debates and interactive practical workshops. Evidently, there were plenty of networking possibilities on site, as well as social dinners and the traditional FESSH party, allowing us to solidify our networks with peers from across Europe.

Main Takeaways and Acknowledgments

The primary value of this fellowship lies in the power of professional exchange. Interacting closely with international mentors and peers exposed us to divergent clinical viewpoints, which fundamentally challenges and enhances one's own approach to hand pathology. Observing how different teams navigate identical clinical problems has undoubtedly broadened my surgical perspective, directly translating into more refined patient care at home.

I highly recommend the FESSH Congress Fellowship to all hand surgeons at the start of their careers; it is a profound catalyst for both personal and professional growth.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the hosts and surgical teams at both KSW and LUKS for their transparency and warm hospitality. Special thanks go to the FESSH organizing committee, Dr. Jonathan Hobby, and Dr. Saskia Kamphuis for organizing our fellowship itinerary. Finally, I want to thank my co-fellow for the first two weeks, Dr. Diogo Gaspar da Sousa, for his companionship and his insightful, ad rem perspective on hand surgery.

REPORT – ARIANNA GATTO

My name is Arianna Gatto, and I am a Plastic Surgeon from Italy with a special interest in Hand Surgery. Last May, I had the privilege of being awarded the FESSH Congress fellowship in Switzerland alongside other European surgeons.

I traveled with Doctor Maria Larrea, an orthopedic surgeon from Spain, whom I feel lucky to have met.

Our first week was spent in Zurich at the Schultess Klinik, and I really have to thank Dr. Herren and Dr. Schindele for the many things learned during these days. We spent most of our time in the OR seeing many TOUCH prosthesis procedures, some primary and some interesting revisions, PIPJ arthroplasty, and many other interesting surgeries. We could also participate in the Thursday research meeting, learning a lot about how research is organized and managed under the careful and professional supervision of Dr. Miriam Marks.



Another opportunity given to us was to visit, for one day each, the University Hospital of Zurich (USZ) and the Balgrist Klinik to observe a wide range of surgeries, from a sarcoma resection with soft tissue reconstruction in the former to a 3D-planned corrective osteotomy for a Madelung deformity in the latter.

The Schultess' team has been wonderful, also outside the hospital, making us feel at home. An affectionate thank-you also goes to Dr. Startseva, Dr. Frey, Dr. Bandzaite, and Dr. Marks for their time and kindness.



Our second week was spent at the Hand Surgery Department of the Kantonsspital in St. Gallen, led by Dr. Martina Greminger. The experience began with a really interesting case of nerve transfers to treat a radial nerve palsy. Besides that, we spent the whole week in the OR assisting a lot of interesting trauma cases with Dr. Sammons: from distal radius fractures to hand fractures treated by combining an arthroscopic approach. Thursday and Friday, the morning meetings were dedicated to journal clubs, which were held in English to let us

comprehend the speeches and be part of the discussion. The work rate here is high, but the équipe is young, full of ideas and enthusiasm that ends up being contagious. I sincerely thank Dr. Greminger for the beautiful program she has organized, for the competence she has shared with us, and for the positive atmosphere that she creates.

FESSH/SSCM 2026 CONGRESS FELLOWSHIP REPORTS

During the third week, we travelled to Basel, where the congress was taking place. Before it began, we took part in various activities, including a CAD lab and a dinner for fellows and teachers. The congress then began with an educational afternoon, followed by an intense programme of interesting sessions and speeches which definitely exceeded my expectations.

I would like to thank FESSH for giving me this valuable opportunity, which I would definitely recommend to anyone looking to expand their knowledge of hand surgery.

REPORT – DOMINIK GRUSZKA

It was a great privilege to be awarded the 2026 FESSH Congress Fellowship. Over three weeks I visited two leading Swiss hand-surgery centres and attended the FESSH Congress in Basel. The programme was an outstanding blend of clinical observation, surgical technique, research culture and collegial exchange, and I returned home with a long list of ideas to put into practice and new friendships that want to be continued.

Week 1 — Chur: Kantonsspital Graubünden

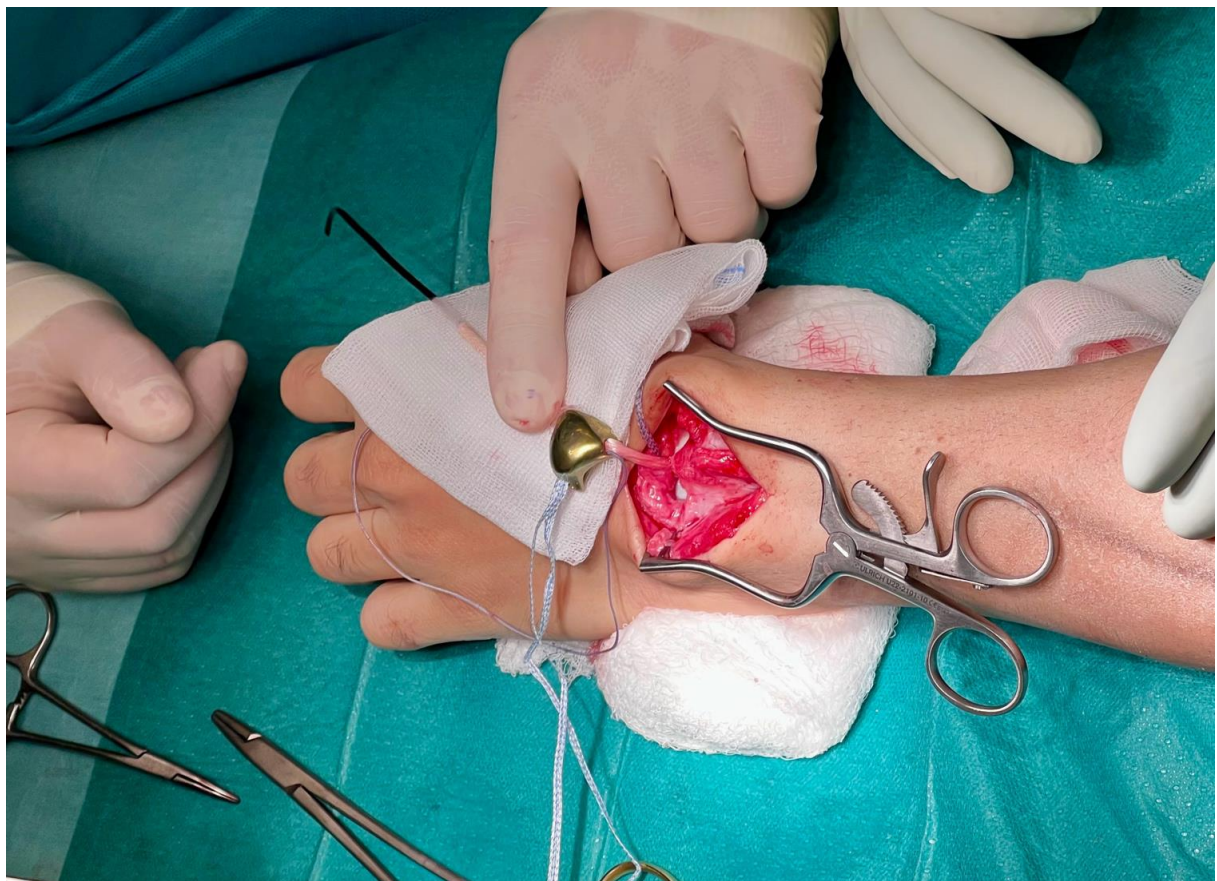
My first week was hosted by Dr Mathias Häfeli. I was impressed by the breadth of reconstructive practice and by the meticulous documentation supported by the Swiss nationwide quality system. Operative highlights included particularly novel to me lunate prostheses developed together with Prof. Honigmann (Basel), now entering their first clinical projects, alongside cadaveric work on the biomechanics of carpal implant fixation — axis alignment and stress shielding around the third metacarpal. Additional deep talks with my co-fellow Harry Benjamin Laing about innovative cases and differences in healthcare systems in Europe, as well as increase of awareness about social media appearance in medicine broaden definitely my perspective.

Week 2 — Zürich: Balgrist, Schulthess Klinik & Universitätsspital Zürich (USZ)

The second week took us with Harry to Zürich. Although the week was short due to the national holiday I was able to visit Universitätsspital Zürich (USZ), Balgrist and Schulthess Clinic. Three hand surgical top clinics in one city – still cooperating due to clear case assignment. At Balgrist University Hospital, which is an orthopaedic clinic, I saw patient-specific, two-plane 3D-printed osteotomy guides for distal radius correction and toured an outstanding research campus with wet and dry labs and 7-T, 3-T, SPECT- and micro-CT imaging. An elegant scapholunate ligament reconstruction using an FCR tendon strip routed over the lunate is a technique I intend to adopt at home. The USZ I was able to see the implantation of TOUCH Prothesis in a posttraumatic osteoarthritis of CMC1 joint and a magnificent motion lab working on recognizing of different movement patterns after invasive hand surgical operations. At the Schulthess Klinik I was struck by the efficient clinical pathways and by mature implant data. I learned a great deal about long-term outcome registries, patient-reported outcome measures (brief MHQ, EQ-5D) and the value of a dedicated data manager. Although the week was short due to the national holiday I was able to visit USZ, Balgrist and Schulthess Clinic.

Week 3 — FESSH Congress, Basel

The final week centred on the FESSH 2026 Congress. It opened with a visit to the Medartis factory, a teaching session and a cadaver dissection at the Anatomy Institute of the University of Basel, followed by the FESSH Educational Afternoon, the Opening Ceremony with certificate handover and group photo, and three full days of an excellent scientific programme. Presenting our two-minute fellowship videos and meeting the wider FESSH community was a personal highlight of the entire experience. I contributed to the Congress as well with one oral and one poster presentation. I am sincerely grateful to FESSH, my hosts in Chur and Zürich, and Medartis for a superbly organised and inspiring fellowship. Beyond the techniques and research infrastructure I will bring back to my home unit, the friendships formed with fellow fellows and teachers will last well beyond these three weeks.



REPORT – NATALIE JUMPER

As a TIG hand surgery fellow coming from a background in plastic and reconstructive surgery about to embark on my consultant career, I was thrilled and grateful to be given the opportunity to experience the 2026 FESSH Congress Fellowship. Not only did I benefit from the surgical expertise and knowledge of our excellent hosting units in Geneva and Basel but I gained both valuable insight and lasting friendship from my fellowship partner Layalee Abo Nasser and the wider group of congress fellows. I'd especially like to thank Saskia Kemphuis who put so much effort and thought into making sure the experience was well-rounded and complete.

Week 1 – Clinique de la Main, Geneva

My daily walk to this private outpatient and daycase unit was a true pleasure, taking me right past the iconic Jet d'Eau, as it burst from the beautiful sky-blue waters of Lake Geneva. The Clinique is a beautiful, modern suite of offices and theatres equipped with radiography, hand therapy rooms, a pre-operative preparation area for anaesthetics and two operating rooms for WALANT/regional anaesthetic cases. We were welcomed warmly by the whole team and included in both consultation (outpatient clinics) and theatre lists as well as MDT (multidisciplinary meetings) and a national teaching session. There were great discussions about technique and approach to management of both simple and complex hand pathologies and I gained insights and knowledge into the benefits of ultrasound as both a diagnostic adjunct and primary surgical modality (Thank you Flavien Mauler). I witnessed a world-first conversion of previous thumb CMCJ fusion to implant arthroplasty but also classic cases of nerve decompression and the use of WALANT. I was also given the opportunity to experience the cuisine of Switzerland and discovered how the healthcare system works and the training path for hand surgery.



Week 2 – University Hospital, Basel

The contrast from private clinic to bustling tertiary centre really allowed me to see the different settings in which hand surgeons can practice in Switzerland. Daily early morning trauma meetings and complex hand surgery procedures were the flavour of Basel and my thanks to both Saskia Kemphuis and Alex Kämpfen for all their organisation to ensure a wide range of excellent cases to experience. Bilateral complex syndactyly, revision wrist fusion, two-stage flexor reconstruction, joint arthroplasty with a twist and arthroscopic management of ganglion were just some of the cases we both observed and assisted in. We enjoyed a scenic dinner out on the Rhine with the hand team and along with the research fellow Macarena Vizcay we explored the sights of Basel in the sunshine.



Week 3 – FESSH Congress

Our week started with the aggregation of all the fellows in Basel where we shared and compared stories, experiences and laughter. Saskia fostered the team spirit with a fantastic tour of the medical history of Basel and a visit to the Medartis factory, where I gained a new respect for each screw! An educational morning covering an array of subjects followed by cadaveric dissection and finally Schnitzel and beer was the perfect end to the fellowship. The congress that followed was a great experience where my only regret was being unable to be in two places at once!

Overall, I would highly recommend this FESSH/SSCM Fellowship. It was a deeply educational experience that offered invaluable social and networking opportunities whilst building lifelong friendships. Thank you to all those involved in the administration, organisation and hosting of such a fantastic fellowship.



REPORT – MARIA LARREA ZABALO

Seeing how things are done in places different from where you have trained or currently work is always enriching. The Congress Fellowship provided an excellent opportunity to do exactly that. Over the course of two weeks, I had the privilege of visiting and learning from some of the leading hand surgery units in Switzerland. During the first week, I was based in Zurich at the Schulthess Clinic. There, I observed a high volume of joint replacement procedures and gained valuable insight into their research structure, which is undoubtedly among the strongest in Europe. The team also organised visits to other renowned hand surgery departments, including the University Hospital Zurich and Balgrist University Hospital. At the University Hospital Zurich, we attended multidisciplinary sessions involving complex tumour resections and reconstructions. It was impressive to witness both the large volume of patients and the complexity of the cases managed by the team. At Balgrist, we were introduced to state-of-the-art three-dimensional planning for the treatment of complex deformities and learned how close collaboration between surgeons and biomedical engineers has made these innovative solutions possible.



I spent the second week of the fellowship in St.Gallen. This centre treats a very high volume of trauma patients and manages what is probably the largest number of distal radius fractures in Switzerland. During my stay, I also had the opportunity to observe peripheral nerve surgery, including nerve transfers, as well as the management of complex fractures. The Hand Surgery Department works closely with the Plastic Surgery Department, which performs a significant number of free flap reconstructions and other advanced microsurgical procedures.



Beyond the academic and surgical experience, the fellowship was equally rewarding on a personal level. I had the opportunity to meet and spend time with fellow participants from different European countries, exchanging ideas and experiences in a stimulating and friendly environment. Building these friendships has been one of the highlights of the programme, and I hope they will lead to future collaborations that contribute to the continued advancement of hand surgery.

REPORT – MARTA TWARDOWSKA

I am delighted to share a summary of my three-week FESSH travelling fellowship, which took me through three Swiss centres before concluding at the FESSH–EFSHT Congress in Basel.

Week 1 — Zurich

Rotating through three different clinics in Zurich rather than staying at a single centre proved to be an excellent idea, as it allowed us to observe a much wider variety of operations. Accommodation in a shared apartment with a fellow fellow, instead of a hotel, was another great decision that strengthened our sense of companionship. Everything was very well organised, and Dr. Olga Politou looked after us warmly, as if we were her own friends.

Week 2 — Frauenfeld and Münsterlingen

The second week was spent at the hospitals in Frauenfeld and Münsterlingen, where Dr. Moritz Scholtes supervised us with great dedication. The whole team took excellent care of us and gave us the opportunity to assist in surgery. The social programme was equally attractive, including a round of golf together.

Week 3 — Basel and the FESSH–EFSHT 2026 Congress

The third week in Basel was likewise very well organised. Housing the fellows together in one small, intimate hotel meant we stayed close and shared breakfasts every morning. At the congress venue we were free to attend the sessions that interested us most individually, while shared breakfasts and dinners gave the whole group a strong sense of community.

Overall, I remember the entire fellowship very fondly — the organisation was of the highest standard from start to finish. My sincere thanks go to Jonathan Hobby and the organising team, including Saskia Kamphuis, for taking care of every single detail, and to FESSH for this unforgettable opportunity.



Fellows on the Rhine promenade, Basel



Fellows at the FESSH–EFSHT 2026 Congress, Basel