

Spotlight from Europe

Serbian Association of Allergologists and Clinical Immunologists (SAACI)

SAACI brings together physicians from a range of primary specialties, including internal medicine, paediatrics, ENT, dermatovenereology, infectious diseases, and clinical immunology.

The Serbian Association of Allergologists and Clinical Immunologists (SAACI), known in Serbian as the Udruženje alergologa i kliničkih imunologa Srbije (UAKIS), was founded in 1958 and serves as the national professional body representing specialists in allergology and clinical immunology across Serbia. SAACI has approximately 120 members, all of whom have completed an additional year of subspecialty training in allergology and clinical immunology, following 4–6 years of postgraduate training in total. The Association is currently led by its President, Snežana Arandžević, and organises a National Congress every 4 years alongside a Scientific Meeting every 2 years.

OVERVIEW

SAACI actively participates in European forums, including the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) National Allergy and Immunology Societies (NAIS) Network, where it holds formal member status, and is a member of the Central & Southern European Allergy and Asthma Alliance (CSEA3), a regional alliance fostering research, education, and collaboration across Central and Southern Europe. Through these memberships, SAACI advocates for the needs of Serbian specialists and patients at a continental level. SAACI operates dedicated working groups and actively contributes to EAACI projects, including those focused on anaphylaxis. In March 2026, the Association also hosted the EAACI Spring Meeting in Belgrade, bringing together the wider European allergy and immunology community in Serbia.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN SERBIAN ALLERGOLOGY AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY

Serbia, like many countries in the region, faces a distinctive set of challenges in delivering high-quality allergy and immunology care. Access to advanced diagnostics, including molecular allergology and specialised clinical immunology

testing, remains concentrated in larger university centres, leaving patients in other parts of the country with significant barriers to timely and accurate diagnosis. On the treatment side, the availability and reimbursement of adrenaline auto-injectors, a life-saving intervention in anaphylaxis, remains limited within the national healthcare system, while allergen immunotherapy, the only disease-modifying treatment for allergic conditions, is not consistently available across all regions. Biological therapies have been introduced in major centres, yet wider availability across the country remains a significant unmet need. Outside major centres, there are too few specialists, and SAACI recognises this as a priority that requires investment in training and workforce development. Despite these challenges, major centres in Serbia have excellent academic institutions with growing experience in biologic therapies and an increasing number of multidisciplinary centres for the management of complex allergic and immunological conditions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Looking ahead, SAACI has identified several key priorities. A major focus is the development of national clinical guidelines for anaphylaxis, one of the most urgent unmet needs in Serbian allergology. Despite

anaphylaxis representing a potentially life-threatening emergency, Serbia currently lacks a nationally adopted guideline, and SAACI is committed to addressing this gap by producing evidence-based recommendations tailored to the local healthcare context. Alongside this, SAACI is working to support the establishment of a national registry for allergic diseases and anaphylaxis, which would provide the data infrastructure needed to better understand disease burden and guide future policy decisions. SAACI is also committed to fostering multicentre research and deepening collaboration with Balkan neighbours, recognising that shared regional challenges are best addressed through coordinated action. Serbian specialists already actively contribute to international studies in the field, and SAACI aims to build further on this foundation. Looking to the future, SAACI plans to develop dedicated support mechanisms for young allergologists and clinical immunologists, including scholarships and mentorship opportunities, with the aim of attracting new generations of specialists to the field and securing the long-term development of the specialty in Serbia.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

Public awareness of allergic and immune-mediated conditions remains low in Serbia, and SAACI is working to improve education among both the general population and healthcare professionals in primary and secondary care. In this regard, SAACI has established collaboration with patient associations representing individuals living with allergic diseases, actively participating in their initiatives and advocating for their rights within the healthcare system. Strengthening the profile and recognition of allergology and clinical immunology within the Serbian healthcare system is a goal that underpins all of SAACI's current initiatives.

UPCOMING EVENTS

A key upcoming milestone is the 5th Scientific Meeting of SAACI, entitled 'T2 Inflammation and Eosinophilic Diseases: From Pathogenesis to Clinical Outcomes',

to be held from 4th–6th December 2026 in Sokobanja, Serbia. The programme will focus on eosinophilic disorders and Type 2 inflammation, covering conditions such as severe asthma, chronic rhinosinusitis with nasal polyps, atopic dermatitis, and food allergy, alongside biologic therapies and the multidisciplinary management of these conditions. The Meeting will bring together allergologists, clinical immunologists, and

specialists from related fields across the region to discuss the latest advances in the understanding and management of Type 2-driven conditions, an area of rapidly evolving science and clinical practice. Looking further ahead, SAACI will host its National Congress in 2028, which will represent a major landmark for the specialty in Serbia.

As allergic and immune-mediated diseases continue to rise in prevalence, SAACI remains committed to ensuring that patients in Serbia have access to timely diagnosis, modern treatments, and evidence-based care. With over 6 decades of activity behind it, SAACI enters its next chapter with a clear agenda: stronger regional collaboration, a growing evidence base, and a healthcare system better equipped to meet the needs of patients living with allergic and immunological conditions.

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i kliničkih imunologa Srbije (UAKIS)**
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