

## Speaker biography



**Claudio E. Sunkel** is a Full Professor of Molecular Biology at the Biomedical Institute of the University of Porto in Portugal. He is Director of the Institute of Molecular Cellular Biology and Head of the Molecular Genetics Group at the same institute. Since 2000 Dr. Sunkel is a Member of the European Molecular Biology Organization. He was Vice-President of the European Molecular Biology Conference (2007-2010), Vice-President of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory Council (2010-2012), Chair of the EMBO Strategic Development Installation Grants Board (2006-2012), and a member of the Molecules, Genes and Cells Funding committee of the Wellcome Trust (2006-2009). He is currently a member of the Wellcome Trust-India Alliance fellowship selection committee (2009-2014) and he was elected Chair of the EMBL Council in 2013. From 2007-2009 Dr. Sunkel was the National Coordinator for the Evaluation of Research Units by the Foundation for Science and Technology of Portugal.

Dr. Sunkel's laboratory is mostly devoted to the study of cell division and the mechanisms involved in maintaining genomic stability in higher eukaryotes. He started these studies during his postdoctoral work at Imperial College in the United Kingdom and later continued this work in Porto, Portugal, leading to the identification, cloning and early studies on the Polo-like (Plks) kinase family of essential mitotic regulators. His studies have used a combination of classical genetics, cell biology and molecular biology with special emphasis on advance light microscopy for *in vivo* studies. His research program explores fundamental aspects of cell division including: the molecular and physical properties of mitotic chromosomes where he has concentrated on the study of condensins; the regulation of progression through mitosis leading to the identification of Polo kinase; the organization and function of the mitotic spindle where he identified the first mutants of  $\gamma$ -tubulin; the genetic and functional analysis of the Mast/Orbit/CLASP family of microtubule-associated proteins; and, more recently, the study of checkpoints protein like Mad2, BubR1, Bub3 and CENP-E involved in ensuring proper chromosome segregation. Future research will investigate the role of chromosome instability in tumorigenesis.

Dr. Sunkel's bibliography includes more than 90 original peer review research articles and reviews or book chapters. He has also participated in various postgraduate programs and supervised 24 Ph.D. students and many postdoctoral researchers. He currently teaches an undergraduate course on Molecular Genetics for Biochemistry and Bioengineering (BSc Major) at the Institute for Biomedical Sciences of the University of Porto. He received a First Degree Honors in Biology from the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom (1979) and a Ph.D. in Genetics (1983) also from the University of Sussex.