

Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe

August 2011

Update on Alliance activities and ongoing EU discussions

In this update the following overview will be provided:

- **Feedback on Common Strategic Framework meeting**
- **Importance of qualified reviewers and your opportunity to suggest project evaluators**
- **IMI workshop in Brussels 15 June 2011**
- **Dissemination of Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe**
- **Annual Meeting – opportunity to input to agenda**
- **New Vice-President**

- **Feedback on Common Strategic Framework meeting**

The Executive Committee of the Alliance was invited to attend the recent Common Strategic Framework discussions in Brussels focusing on “Horizon 2020” and FP 8. The most important information provided as well as the Minutes of that meeting are enclosed.

Some conclusions:

1. An overview of the **Green Paper Consultations** was provided (“Questionnaire for CSF”– enclosed; link to all written responses received:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=responses&showtoo=&show=european_organisations). There were many replies and the impressive number of publications from FP 7 was stressed as well as the fact that many publications came AFTER the end of the programs-again reinforcing the need for instruments to allow a continuation of EU-funded programs (and the need for structured sustainability options) to deliver unique results. The number of patents and SMEs/job creations was also impressive. It was also stressed that receiving EU funding gave leverage for additional national or international research funding.

2. The CSF Workshop was focused on general research issues and European needs. Some important information was presented as background - see the attachment for Horizon 2020.

The **budget proposal** from the European Parliament (EUP) for European research was increased to 80.2 billion Euro for 2014-2020. FP 7 was funded with 53 billion Euro. However, the new budget needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers and is not final yet. Furthermore, the proportion for biomedical research versus energy, environment etc is still unclear. Here, it is important for the Alliance to lobby strongly in order to increase the previous amount of approx. 10% to a 2-3-fold increase!

3. Report from a previously held **Expert Panel** was also provided (see attachment) outlining possible directions for Health research in FP 8. Fragmentation of European research is much in focus and in particular how to better harmonise European activities. For instance, it is proposed to establish a “European Health Research and Innovations Institute” similar to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The importance of support for research infrastructure and collaborations with SMEs is also emphasised.

4. The **Minutes of the CSF Workshop** is also enclosed with the Chair’s conclusions. These will provide a basis for the further work with the FP 8 programs. So far, they are quite general and will need to be more concrete.

Executive Committee:

President: Prof. U. Smith, Sweden **Vice President:** Prof. J. Celis, Denmark
Vice President: Prof. K. Sipido, Belgium **Hon. Treasurer:** Prof. L. Nicod, Switzerland

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- **Importance of qualified reviewers and your opportunity to suggest project evaluators**

5. At a **separate meeting with the European Commission (EC)**, we raised the absolute need to have the best reviewers / evaluators of project applications since the possibility to appeal decisions via the so-called redress procedure and have this lead to action / reversal is almost always without success.

Moreover, please find attached an opportunity for you to nominate reviewers of Commission projects – here is a website to input suggested names of reviewers. We strongly urge you to avail of this important opportunity and submit suitable names since these will be used by the EC, also recognising this problem.

- **IMI workshop in Brussels 15 June 2011**

6. IMI organized a workshop for stakeholders to which the Alliance was invited. The main themes were on the scientific content of the calls for projects and the participation in the IMI programs. We presented our concerns as defined in the mission of the Alliance.

(1) There is insufficient input from scientists in the definition of the work program. The IMI program is first decided by industry (EFPIA group), with only secondary and limited input from other stakeholders. This needs to be remedied.

(2) Although there is a large financial contribution from industry, there is a large EC contribution as well, under FO7 representing 1/6 of the total Health budget. This requires alignment of programs and again input from scientists.

(3) Participation of academic partners remains low. Hurdles are lack of awareness, IP barriers, and problems with administrative load (legal aspects and rules). Administrative load also relates to the fragmentation of funding for biomedical research with each program having its own rules.

All of these were acknowledged and supported by many participants. We will follow up whether there will indeed be further opportunities for feedback in the near future.

- **Dissemination of Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe**

7. We have also published another paper about the Alliance and its priorities, this time in the EMBO Mol Med (enclosed), as well as disseminated information in all journals of the founding societies. Please use this possibility to further lobby for the activities of the Alliance.

- **Annual Meeting – opportunity to input to agenda**

8. The program for the Annual Meeting on 1 December 2011 at the Marivaux Hotel in Brussels is ready and speakers have been invited. Please provide us with specific items you wish to discuss in the afternoon.

- **New Vice-President**

9. We have a new Vice- President of the Alliance representing ECCO since Prof. Caroline Dive had to retire for personal reasons. The new Vice- President is Prof. Julio Celis from Copenhagen, Denmark.

We look forward to seeing you again in Brussels.

Prof. Ulf Smith
President

Prof. Julio Celis
Vice President

Prof. Karin Sipido
Vice President

Prof. Laurent Nicod
Honorary Treasurer