

Innovative Medicines Initiative and Diabetes

An opportunity for the European Commission to work with Stakeholders to find solutions to the challenge of diabetes: a call for action

EURADIA strongly supports the European Council's view that swift agreement should be reached on the IMI.¹ EURADIA has been supporting this opportunity for diabetes research since participating in development of the metabolic pathway of the *Strategic Research Agenda*.²

One focus of IMI is on understanding disease mechanisms and disease markers to provide opportunities for Europe to create new and better treatment for diabetes and its devastating complications. EURADIA has been proactive in campaigning for increased research funding in this area and better coordination of such research.³

The IMI *Strategic Research Agenda* states: "diabetes is associated with a number of other metabolic abnormalities, such as obesity, dyslipidaemia and metabolic syndrome. In addition, the prevalence of diabetes is expanding in an exponential manner from the current 150 million to approximately 250 million in the next 15 years. This disease, and its complications, cause not only human suffering but also a major economic burden for society. There is a huge unmet medical need for pharmaceutical therapies for the prevention, treatment and cure of diabetes."²

- Diabetes is among the leading causes of blindness, renal failure, lower limb amputation, and cardiovascular disease (CVD) (70-80% of people with diabetes die from CVD).⁴
- On average people with type 2 diabetes will die 5-10 years before people without diabetes.⁴
- The life expectancy of a child with type 1 diabetes is shortened by 15 years.⁵

Research funding and coordination should be proportional to measurable effects of the disease. IMI is an essential part of research funding in Europe.

EURADIA is an Alliance of non-governmental organisations (representing researchers and health professionals who translate research output to the front line of diabetes care), and the pharmaceutical industry. Most importantly people with diabetes and their families are represented within this Alliance that focuses exclusively on the promotion of European diabetes research. **The Alliance is ideally placed to play a role in the IMI metabolic disease track due to its specialised but broad partnership.**

EURADIA gives special consideration and strong support to the IMI and urges the European Institutions to adopt the IMI as quickly as possible in order to enable this crucial Joint Technology Initiative to start its research activities without further delay.

¹ European Council urges forward movement on JTIs, EIT and Galileo (2007-06-25) <http://cordis.europa.eu/era/news.htm>

² <http://www.imi-europe.org>

³ Diabetes research investment in the European Union. PA Halban, E Ferrannini, J Nerup (2006) *Nature Medicine* 12:70-72

⁴ <http://www.idf.org>

⁵ <http://www.jdrf.org>