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Letter

From the Chair



Dear Members,

Last year, we restructured EURADIA to allow the Alliance to become more dynamic and proactive. I am pleased to report that this process is now complete and we have everything in place to ensure that EURADIA lives up to the expectations of all its members while fulfilling its mission to promote diabetes research in Europe.

In particular, it was decided at our October 2005 strategic planning meeting to sign a new contract with Weber Shandwick, our public relations company in Brussels, and I am pleased to introduce you to Philippe Ghysseels from their office who is already hard at work for us. Meanwhile, Carole Brendel will continue to work for us as Scientific Officer until October 2006. We shall be consulting you on her replacement in due course.

The EURADIA Newsletter is intended to be sent out on a quarterly basis and will update the membership on our activities as well as highlighting important events in Europe relevant to our mission. It will be apparent that the Alliance has been quite active since our October meeting. We were asked by the Major Diseases Unit of the EC Directorate General for Research to suggest specific themes for early calls for applications for FP7 and I thank those EURADIA members concerned for their precious help. Aside from the intrinsic value of these suggestions, the Major Diseases Unit found it particularly useful to be able to communicate with a single coordinating agency for collecting this information.

I have been contacted by several members of the Alliance with regard to the proposed Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) of FP7. I now plan to meet with IMI leadership in order to see how EURADIA might help with the diabetes arm of this important project and shall of course keep you fully informed.

The Austrian Presidency of the EU has focused on diabetes as a major health problem and several members of EURADIA were involved in the very successful meeting in Vienna (www.diabetesconference.at). EURADIA will send representatives to future relevant European meetings including, for the first time, the European Health Forum in Bad Gastein (9th International Forum Gastein). This will be an important venue for the Alliance to expand its contacts and to promote European diabetes research in the relevant fields.

We are starting to organize our annual meeting in Brussels. This will be held in early November 2006 and I look forward to seeing you there. We shall be inviting members of the European Parliament as well as representatives of the relevant Directorates General of the European Commission and we hope to have a couple of guest speakers.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Sarah Morris, Vice-Chair of EURADIA, for her hard work for the Alliance during this particularly critical period. The success of EURADIA depends upon active involvement of all its members and we look forward to working with you on our new projects. Do not hesitate to contact Sarah or myself with questions, suggestions or complaints!

Philippe Halban
Chair EURADIA

Mission Statement and Board of EURADIA

Following the EURADIA strategic planning meeting in Brussels 19th October 2005, the Partners have agreed on the following Mission Statement:

“As a unique alliance of NGOs and pharmaceutical companies, EURADIA’s mission is to improve the lives of people affected by diabetes both now and in the future, through advocacy of diabetes research in Europe at the highest political and societal levels of influence, and by shaping the allocation of resources for diabetes research in Europe through increased awareness.”

EURADIA is presided over by an elected Chair and Co-Chair. Decisions are made by a Board composed of one representative per member organisation. The elected chair of EURADIA is Philippe Halban who represents EASD and the Co-Chair Sarah Morris representing AstraZeneca.

The following representatives are currently serving on the Board:

S. Björk, Novo Nordisk
F. Camus, Servier
A.-M. Felton, Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND)
P. Halban, European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD)
H. Henrichs, International Diabetes Federation European Region (IDF-European Region)
R. Insel, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF)
S. Jariwala, GlaxoSmithKline
L. Kleinebreil, Primary Care Diabetes Europe (PCD Europe)
S. Lion, Eli Lilly and Company
S. Morris, AstraZeneca
M. Ypinga, MSD
tbd, Sanofi Aventis

Summary plan of EURADIA activities for 2006

Key messages and a **contact programme** will be developed with the assistance of Weber Shandwick and delivered to EURADIA Partners in May 2006.

A key **diabetes fact sheet** and a **position paper** will be prepared with Weber Shandwick and submitted to the Membership for approval in May 2006.

Discussions in the European Parliament on FP7 and **major events taking place in Brussels** will be monitored by Weber Shandwick throughout the year. Updates will appear on the EURADIA Website and its quarterly newsletters.

Starting this year, EURADIA will issue **quarterly newsletters** on its main activities and deliverables. Partners will be welcome to contribute to the newsletters with articles or announcements. Next newsletters will be published in June, September and December.

EURADIA's **Website** will be reshaped and updated during the Summer. New information will be added, e.g., the Mission Statement, position papers and quarterly newsletters. The design and navigation system within the site will be improved as well.

EURADIA **business cards** will be made available in May 2006 to EURADIA Partners. It was finally decided to create anonymous cards - containing the Mission Statement and logos of all Partners - that can be handled together with each Member's personal business card.

European meetings – agenda

14-17 September 2006. 42nd EASD Annual Meeting 2006, Copenhagen-Malmoe. The largest scientific meeting on diabetes in Europe. EURADIA will hold a booth on this occasion.

4-7 October 2006. 9th International Forum Gastein. The Health Forum at Bad Gastein is Europe's leading health policy event, with diabetes well placed on the agenda. EU Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou and 15 ministers and undersecretaries are expected to meet on this occasion with leading representatives from industry, science and health officials. For the first time, EURADIA will be represented at the forum.

November 2006. EURADIA Annual Meeting, Brussels. On the occasion of the Diabetes Day. (see below)

Suggestions for EU calls for tender sent to the Commission

Starting in March 2005, EURADIA has collected suggestions from its Partners for the first calls for proposals of the Seventh Framework Programme and sent them as a single document to the Major Diseases Unit of Directorate General for Research of the European Commission. It was suggested that the major themes to be addressed during FP7 should be (suggested by named EURADIA member(s)):

- **Non-invasive imaging of beta cell mass** (EASD, GlaxoSmithKline, Novo Nordisk, Servier)
- **Inflammatory, oxidative or virally-induced routes to beta cell destruction** (EASD, Novo Nordisk)
- **Beta cell mitochondrial dysfunction and type 2 diabetes** (Novo Nordisk, Servier)
- **Glucose recognition in beta cells, insulin secretion, central regulation of glucose homeostasis** (EASD, Novo Nordisk)
- **Pharmacogenomics. Geno- and phenotypical characterization of type 2 diabetes subjects to tailor therapy** (EASD, Novo Nordisk)
- **Vascular complications of diabetes - mechanisms and prevention** (EASD)
- **Pregnancy in type 2 diabetes** (FEND)
- **Diabetes in Russia or China** (Novo Nordisk)
- **Food intake, energy expenditure and obesity therapy** (Novo Nordisk)
- **Molecular basis of morbid obesity** (EASD)

The budget of the Seventh Framework Programme is still under discussion. EURADIA will keep its membership fully informed of all developments and decisions. For a list of EU funded projects in the field of diabetes/obesity research, please go to:

<http://www.cordis.lu/lifescihealth/major/diabetes-eu-funding.htm>

(Webpage set up with the help of EURADIA)

EU news

Latest news

New DG SANCO Director. The European Commission has appointed **Dr Andrzej Rys** (45 - Polish) as director of the Public Health and Risk Assessment department of Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection as of 4 June 2006. He will take over from Georgios Gouvas, current acting Director. Dr Rys served as Deputy Health Minister of the Polish government (1999–2001).



The EU budget for the term 2007 to 2013 was finally agreed by the Parliament and the Austrian Presidency in a lengthy evening session on 4 April. The total budget has gone up by Euro 4 billion since the December proposals. This includes a Euro 300 million extra to what the Council had agreed for the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). However, MEPs were quick to express disappointment at the level of funding for research. Confusingly, the final figure for the FP7 budget has not yet been ironed out, although it will include the extra 300 million mentioned above. A Commission spokesperson said that the final details were in the 'i-dotting and t-crossing' stage. The total extra going to research and education, including FP7 funding, is 2.1 billion euro over the 2007 to 2013 timeframe.

Since January 2006

On the 11th of January, the European Commission published a **proposal on the rules for participation in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for research**, laying out the contractual aspects of the programme. The Commission intended to simplify FP7 in comparison to its predecessor FP6, and claimed that this proposal 'provides the vehicle for implementing many aspects of that simplification'.

The Director General of the Commission's Enterprise and Industry DG, Heinz Zourek, made a plea on the 18th of January **for innovation to be treated the same as research under the EU budget for 2007 to 2013**, and used the example of his home country Austria to show how an aggressive innovation

policy could contribute the improvement of competitiveness.

The governing body of the proposed **European Research Council (ERC)**, the Scientific Council, met on 24 and 25 January in order to discuss its scientific strategy and operating arrangements. In particular, the council decided to set up **two funding streams**: one to establish and support excellent, early-stage, independent researchers, and the other to give broader support for excellent and innovative frontier research projects, carried out by individual teams and led by researchers of any level of experience.

On the 25th and the 26th of January, the Commission proposal concerning the seventh framework programme was taken into consideration in the **Committee of Industry of the European Parliament**. The Rapporteur Mr. Buzed (EPP- ED) modified the **agenda for the FP7 within the Parliament**:

- New deadline for tabling amendments to the draft report: 23 February
- Vote in the Committee on May 2006
- Vote in the plenary in June 2006
- Informal meetings among Council, Parliament and Commission (i.e. the so-called triologue meetings) should take place in July 2006. These meetings are aimed at reaching a smooth and faster agreement among these institutions, so to ensure that the dossier is finalized by the end of the year.

Speaking to MEPs on 26 January, EU Science and Research Commissioner **Janez Potočnik** outlined those parts of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) proposal that must remain under a reduced budget, and **urged the Parliament to continue its FP7 debate without waiting for a final FP7 budget decision**. Mr. Potočnik also questioned some of changes requested by rapporteur Jerzy Buzek in his report on the FP7 proposals.

A '**European Petition for Research and Innovation**', signed by over 50 senior figures from politics, industry and academia, urged the European Council to rethink its December 2005 agreement on the long-term EU budget for competitiveness and innovation support. MEPs Jerzy Buzek and Jorgo Chatzimarkakis delivered the petition to the current President of the European Council, Austrian Federal Chancellor

Wolfgang Schüssel, at the European Parliament on 31 January 2006.

The intergroup on bioethics met for a symposium in the European Parliament in Brussels on 31 January, with **appeals for stem cell research to be included in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)**. Experts addressing the symposium explained the current state of stem cell research and highlighted the EU funding gaps compared to research in the US.

On the 6th of February, the **European Research Advisory Board (EURAB)** claimed that **European policy was not well adapted to harness the potential of research and technology organisations (RTOs)**. RTOs are the third component in the European research landscape, along with enterprises and higher education institutions.

MEPs Jerzy Buzek and Jorgo Chatzimarkakis launched the **'EP Research and Innovation Circle'** in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 14 February. The circle will meet four times per year in the Parliament to **'discuss fundamental and current issues on research and innovation'**, and will also hold an annual conference. The first conference will address innovation, while the next three will address nanotechnologies, biotechnology and information technologies.

On the 21st of February, the European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) took into consideration the working document of the "specific programs" for the Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013). The specific programmes are: **Cooperation, Ideas, People, Capacities**; they will be implemented through direct actions by the Joint Research Centre.

The European Commission has unveiled its draft plans for creating a **European Institute of Technology (EIT)**, based on a two-tier structure consisting of a central governing board and a network of seconded 'knowledge communities' from universities, research centres and companies across Europe. The proposals were presented on 22 February by Commission President José Manuel Barroso, and followed a public consultation that collected over 700 contributions. The majority of respondents called for the EIT to be based on a network of some kind, he said, but a significant number - around a quarter - thought it should be a

single institution, if not necessarily based on a single site.

European academics, businessmen and politicians took part in a roundtable discussion organised by online media outlet Science|Business in Paris on 7 March, to try and form a **manifesto to boost Europe's stagnant growth and low investment in research and development**. The recent Aho* group report on innovation in Europe was enthusiastically taken up by Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik and Information Society and Media Commissioner Viviane Reding, but before moving to implementation, the roundtable discussion was a chance to find out what some captains of industry see as the best way forward.

**Mr. Esko Aho is Former Prime Minister of Finland & President of the Finnish national fund for research and development (Sitra).*

On the 9th of March MEPs, national ministers and other stakeholders called on the Commission not to reduce the funding allocation for health research that it set out in its initial proposals for the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The Commission's original proposals called for a doubling of the FP7 budget compared with FP6, with health research set to receive 8.3 billion euro between 2007 and 2013. Since then, however, discussions among Europe's leaders on the EU's financial perspectives have led to a **compromise proposal that will see the EU research budget increase by 75 per cent in real terms by 2013 compared with the 2006 level**.

EURADIA address book of key EU players

EURADIA, in collaboration with Weber Shandwick, the public relation agency based in Brussels, has put together an **address book of key EU players** relevant to the expectations and concerns of the diabetes community. EURADIA Partners will be welcome to ask EURADIA directly when they need to identify any specific contact person at the EU level.

EURADIA Annual Meeting

The EURADIA Annual Meeting will be held in Brussels in **early November 2006**. It will be a one day meeting featuring an overview of EURADIA activities and discussing plans for 2007. There will also be invited speakers. The Meeting will gather EURADIA Partners and their guests, representatives of the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament. The date and venue will be confirmed in due course.