ecopa messenger

October 30, 2009, edition #21

Dear *ecopa* messenger subscriber,

In Budapest/Hungary, the EU 7th Framework Programme research project START-UP, directed by *ecopa*, had its major workshop in this year on October 2-3, 2009. By this last workshop, the 'active' part of the START UP-project has come to an end. The topic was "Bottlenecks in the pharmaceutical industry", with regard to possibilities to further pursue replacement and identify actions for a roadmap. Yet another format by which regulators and industry scientists presented and discussed in sequence.

Programme of the START-UP Workshop (53 kb)

Photos of the START-UP Workshop

This START-UP-workshop on Replacement was organized by the Hungarian and the German platform organizations, hucopa and set.

ecopa has had its 2008-Annual Meeting addressing deadlines in the EU last November:

Minutes of the 9th *ecopa* Annual Meeting 2008 (131 kb)

This year's Annual meeting is going to take place on November 28-29, 2009 at the Brussels Sheraton Airport Hotel, as usual, addressing the 10-years' anniversary of *ecopa*. The draft program is to be found here:

Programme of the 10th *ecopa* Annual Meeting 2009 (25 kb)

In Budapest, at the last *ecopa* Board Meeting held on October 1, 2009, the preparations for the elections were taken up. Progress will be informed upon.

Please register as soon as possible, because there will be more people interested than usually: registration form see here:

Registration for the 10th *ecopa* Annual Meeting 2009 (672 kb)

This year, beside of the scientific workshop on Saturday, there will be a preceding meeting of the National Consensus Platforms on Friday afternoon, also preparing the elections for the new *ecopa* Board to be performed then subsequently on Sunday morning.

Bernward Garthoff
Treasurer *ecopa* on behalf of the *ecopa* Management Board

P.S.: Any proposal or recommendation regarding style, content or distribution of the newsletter is highly welcome and appreciated (bgarthoff@t-online.de). If you know other people or institutions interested, have them visit our website and subscribe to this newsletter.

Issue # 21 (October 2009)

top

I.1. General News

top

I.1.1. Recent News on REACH and GHS

First REACH list of dangerous chemicals agreed:

http://www.euractiv.com/en/environment/reach-list-dangerous-chemicals-agreed/ article-176244

EU Member States approve world-wide rules for labelling of chemicals

The European Commission welcomed the agreement by the EU Member States to align EU legislation on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures to the United Nations Globally Harmonised System (GHS). This new system is supposed to ensure that the same hazards will be described and labelled in the same way all around the world. By using internationally agreed classification criteria and labelling elements, it is expected to facilitate trade and to contribute towards global efforts to protect humans and the environment from hazardous effects of chemicals. The new regulation will complement the REACH regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals. The European Parliament already the 3rd of September this year approved the GHS regulation. The next step will be its publication in the Official Journal of the EC.

The regulation will require companies to classify, label and package appropriately their hazardous chemicals before placing them on the market. It aims to protect workers, consumers and the environment by means of labelling which reflects possible hazardous effects of the chemical, while also taking over from REACH notification of classifications to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki.

The regulation will after a transitional period replace the current rules on classification, labelling and packaging of substances (Directive 67/548/EEC) and mixtures (Directive 1999/45/EC). After entry into force, the deadline for substance classification according to the new rules will be 1 December 2010 and for mixtures 1 June 2015.

More information about the new rules can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/reach/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/ghs/index_en.htm

Whether the highly acclaimed expectations are later met by reality, has to be seen.

ECHA (European Chemical Agency)

top

European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) runs the REACH-IT portal

More information here: http://echa.europa.eu/doc/press/
Access to REACH-IT portal: http://echa.europa.eu/reachit_en.asp

ECHA held its first stakeholder's day on October 10, 2008. The outcome is published here:

http://echa.europa.eu/home_en.asp

General information and more events by ECHA, related to REACH, see the website:

http://echa.europa.eu/home_en.asp

www.epaa.eu.com top

I.1.2. European Partnership on Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing (EPAA)

For outcome of the recent Mirror Group meetings and the last workshops, see the EPAA-website:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/epaa/

EPAA-newsletter of September 2009 is published and can be read here:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/epaa/epaa_newsletter_200903.pdf

NEWS:

EPAA Annual Meeting 2009 will take place on Nov. 6, 2009 in Brussels in the premises of the European Commission (Charlemagne Building) Deadline for online registration is October 30, 2009. The conference theme is "dissemniation of 3R-aspects".

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/epaa/4_2_conf_2009.htm

EPAA-events are listed under: http://www.epaa.eu.com

http://imi.europa.eu top

I.1.3. IMI is launched

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) has been launched on April 30, 2008. This is an initiative launched by both the European Commission and the EFPIA, the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry Associations. The goal of this initiative is to give an impulse to biopharmaceutical innovation in Europe. Universities, hospitals and public institutions can get financing for a research project.

IMI organises annual calls to be participated by academia and small companies. The subjects are determined by the EFPIA in cooperation with the European Commission. The first calls are out by now.

Executive Director appointed

At its meeting of June 10, 2009 the Innovative Medicines Initiative Joint Undertaking's Governing Board took the decision to appoint **Professor Michel Goldman** as Executive Director of the IMI JU. Professor Goldman was chosen out of a shortlist of candidates following the selection and appointment procedures. He will take his position once the employment contract with the IMI JU has been finalized and signed.
Michel Goldman is Professor of immunology at the Faculty of Medicine of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) in Belgium.

Outcome of First Call published. More see here:

http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/802

A working group with IP experts and representatives of the IMI Founding members and of the Member States has been set up at the request of the IMI JU Governing Board. The aim is to exchange views on the IMI IP policy and coordinate a targeted dialogue between interested parties. Clarification note - IMI IP policy available. More info see here:

http://www.imi.europa.eu/intellectual-property_en.html

More information can be found here:

http://imi.europa.eu/docs/imi-scientific-priorities2008_en.pdf

http://imi.europa.eu/calls-01_en.html

See the website of IMI here and check the upcoming events:

http://www.imi.europa.eu/index_en.html

I.2. Other News top

I.2.1. Nanotech, Ecological Risk Asessment Symposium

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its Science Policy Council had issued a nanotechnology white paper. The paper was aimed at providing information on the science issues and needs associated with nanotechnology, and to communicate them to stakeholders and the public.

http://www.epa.gov/osa/nanotech.htm

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and its Science Policy Council has also installed a

Framework for Application of the Toxicity Equivalence Methodology for Polychlorinated Dioxins, Furans, and Biphenyls in Ecological Risk Assessment

Organized in accordance with EPA's Guidelines for Ecological Risk Assessment, this framework is intended to assist EPA scientists in using the toxicity equivalence methodology in ecological risk assessments that involve dioxins and dioxin-like chemicals, as well as to inform EPA decision makers, other agencies, and the public about this methodology.

More information see here:

http://www.epa.gov/osa/raf/teffframework/index.htm

I.2.2. Review of Directive 86/609

The new version is out since November 5th, 2008, and being discussed in the member states and its administrative representative groups. Article 44-46 in chapter IV, address alternatives specifically.

Progress can be followed under:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/nextsteps_en.htm

Update on Dir 86/609 Follow up Legislation: With the first reading on May 5 of this year, in the European Parliament, the legislative process has been further initiated. Under Czech Presidency, and since midst of the year, Swedish Presidency, the process has been pursued by the Member States Working Groups for the Council in several meetings; the last months even bi-weekly. The next level for the Council side, to start by beginning of November, is the consultation series of the attachees of the permanent representations of the Member States. It is expected that the consultation process should still be finalized by the end of the year, when EC, Council and Parliament will have to finalize their consultations; a first informal meeting between these parties - called trilog - has taken place on October 14, 2009.

II.1. EU 6th Framework Programme Projects / *ecopa* Working Groups

top

II.1.1.1. Recent News on FP6 and FP7 projects

NEWS:
Next Board Meetings will be determined following the *ecopa* Annual Meeting end of November 2009.

Representatives of *ecopa* in EU projects 6th Framework Programme:

- *SSA project ForInViTox* (Forum for researchers and regulators to meet manufacturers of toxicology test methods) - *ecopa* is represented by Dr. Odile De Silva.
- *BioSim* – Flavia Zucco represents *ecopa* in this EU Project.
- *CarcinoGENOMICS* – Bernward Garthoff is the *ecopa* representative in this IP FP6 project. *ecopa* has taken over the Work Package of dissemination of results of the consortium.
  A questionnaire of the WP 11 regulatory group can be found on the carcinoGENOMICS website for consultation and input.
  Input is requested and welcome from representatives of regulators, authorities, agencies and especially from toxicologists in industry and academia.
- *ACute Tox* – Peter Maier is the representative in the Advisory Board.
- *Sens-it-iv* – Vera Rogiers (represented by the *ecopa* secretariate) is the representative in the Advisory Board, and *ecopa* is seconding in the dissemination of results.
- *Liintop* – Horst Spielmann is the representative in the Advisory Board.
- *ReProTect* – Karin Gabrielson, Vera Rogiers and Bernward Garthoff (Chair) are representatives on the Supervising Board, and *ecopa* is seconding in the dissemination of results.
- *START-UP* – START-UP is the *ecopa*-follow-up-project for CONAM.
- *ESNATS* - *ecopa* is lead part of the dissemination workpackage.

- *ecopa* – latest *ecopa*-Board meeting took place on October 1, 2009 in Budapest/Hungary. The minutes of the *ecopa*-Board Meeting can be obtained here:

Minutes *ecopa* Board Meeting of February 25, 2009, in Rome, Italy (33 kb)

The European Commission has published a booklet on all European FP6-projects concerned with alternative testing. You can download it from this link:

http://www.ecopa.eu/download.php?file=alternative-test-strat_en.pdf

II.1.1.2. Platforms

II.1.1.2.1. Austrian Platform
» z e t – Austrian Centre for Alternative and Complementary Methods to Animal Testing

- The 16th Congress on Alternatives to Animal Testing – Linz 2010 is being prepared, it will take place on September 3-5, 2010 in Linz, Austria.

II.1.1.2.2. Belgian Platform
» Foundation Prince Laurent

II.1.1.2.3. Czech Platform
» CZECOPA

II.1.1.2.4. Danish Platform
» DACOPA

II.1.1.2.5. Dutch Platform
» Currently not active

- PDF: Latest issue of the NCA newsletter, published on November 25, 2008

II.1.1.2.6. Finnish Platform
» Fincopa

- Fincopa 's website:
  http://www.uta.fi/jarjestot/fincopa/

II.1.1.2.7. French Platform
» Plateforme Nationale pour le développement des Méthodes alternatives à l'experimentation animale

II.1.1.2.8. German Platform
» Stiftung set

- Stiftung set organized, together with the Hungarian platform hucopa, the Workshop on Replacement on October 2-3, 2009. This Workshop was part of the FP7 EU-project START-UP.

http://www.tierversuche-ersatz.de/

II.1.1.2.9. Hungarian Platform
» Hucopa

- In context with the START-UP Workshop on Replacement in Budapest on October 2–3, 2009, jointly organized by the Hungarian and the German Platform. hucopa organized an additional Workshop in Hungarian language, the according press release as well in local language.
  Pictures of the event can be found here:

http://www.vetphysiol.hu/pics/replacement/

II.1.1.2.10. Italian Platform
» IPAM - Italian Platform on Alternative Methods

II.1.1.2.11. Irish Platform

II.1.1.2.12. Norwegian Platform
» Norecopa

- Two centres for the 3Rs in Norway:

  The Norwegian Reference Centre for Laboratory Animal Science and Alternatives (http://oslovet.veths.no) is based at the Laboratory Animal Unit at the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science. Karina Smith at the Centre maintains the NORINA database of audiovisual alternatives (http://oslovet.veths.no/NORINA) and the TextBase database of literature within laboratory animal science (http://oslovet.veths.no/textbase). The Laboratory Animal Unit is accredited by AAALAC International. The Centre maintains a large website with information on the 3Rs.

  In October 2007, the organisation Norecopa was launched. Norecopa is Norway's Consensus Platform for Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of Animal Experiments (http://www.norecopa.no). Norecopa is a member organisation with a board of representing the 4 stakeholders interested in animal research (regulators, academia, industry and animal welfare organisations). Norecopa is recognised by *ecopa* (http://www.ecopa.eu) as Norway's national platform for the 3Rs. Norecopa's annual budget is at present sufficient to finance the secretary in a part-time position (50%), pay for the administrative work and some scientific activity. Norecopa is working to increase funding, and not least, to establish a research and development fund for work within the 3Rs.

  Norecopa and the Reference Centre cooperate closely with the Norwegian Research Council and the Norwegian Animal Research Authority (the regulatory body). The NRC has funded a report on research needs related to the welfare of fish in research. Norecopa has also started to produce position statements, so far on toeclipping and fasting of rodents. Both websites hold extensive information on existing guidelines for the use of animals in research.

  The Reference Centre and Norecopa have together arranged two international consensus meetings on harmonisation of the care and use of animals in research: one on fish and one on wildlife research. The third such meeting (on fish) was held in September 2009. All the presentations and conclusions from these meetings are available from the Norecopa website:
  http://www.norecopa.no
- Latest newsletter of norecopa can be obtained here: http://www.norecopa.eu/sider/tekst.asp?side=83

II.1.1.2.13. Polish Platform
» Polcopa

II.1.1.2.14. Spanish Platform
» REMA – Red Española para el Desarrollo de Métodos Alternativos a la Experimentación Animal

- The REMA activities can be found at (Spanish version):

  http://www.remanet.net/actividades/

II.1.1.2.15. Swedish Platform
» Swecopa

- Swecopa held it's AGM on March 31. Karin Gabrielson Morton was re-elected to chair Swecopa. Other board members are Dr Cecilia Clemedson (Swedish Fund for Research without Animal Experiments), Professor Roland Grafström (Karolinska Institute), Dr Krister Martin (AstraZeneca), Rebecca Ceder (Karolinska Institute) and Helena Elofsson (Board of Agriculture).
- News from Swecopa is published on the website www.swecopa.se under "News". A newsletter in Swedish is also available at http://www.swecopa.se/swe_sid5_aktuellt.html
  E-mail us at info@swecopa.se if you want to receive the newsletter.

II.1.1.2.16. Swiss Platform
» 3R Research Foundation Switzerland

- On May 28, 2009, the Administrative Board approved the Annual Report on the Foundation's activities during 2008 as well as the financial statements for the year. A total of CHF 553,360.00 was allotted to research projects, while 6 new projects were approved for funding and two final reports were submitted.
  http://www.forschung3r.ch/en/information/jb08.html

  Further details on the website:
  http://www.forschung3r.ch/en/guidelines/index.html

  Five new projects initiated in 2009 by the 3R Research Foundation Switzerland

  Engineering of a human brain tumor model to replace animal experimentation Dr. Olivier Preynat,

Department of Pathology and Immunology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Geneva, Switzerland
http://www.forschung3r.ch/en/projects/pr_115_09.html

Reducing the number of fish and their suffering during acute toxicity testing of potential environmental pollutants (OECD Guideline no. 203). Dr. Hans Rufli, ecotoxsolutions, Basle, Switzerland
http://www.forschung3r.ch/en/projects/pr_114_08.html

Generic *in vitro* evaluation assay for immunological correlates of protection, to replace animal challenge infection Dr. Kenneth McCullough and Dr. A. Summerfield, Institute of Virology and Immunoprophylaxis (IVI), Mittelhäusern, Switzerland
http://www.forschung3r.ch/en/projects/pr_113_08.html

A novel *in vitro* model for holistic assessment and optimisation of engineered tissue for functional cartilage repair Dr. Zhijie Luo and Prof. Jennifer Kirkham, Leeds Dental Institute, University of Leeds (UK)
http://www.forschung3r.ch/en/projects/pr_112_08.html

Establishment of an organ ex-vivo tissue slice model for cardiovascular research in particular for therapeutic atherosclerosis targeting Prof. Patrick Hunziker and Dr. K. Bänziger, University Hospital, Basle, Switzerland
http://www.forschung3r.ch/en/projects/pr_111_08.html

Latest bulletin of June 2009 "Refined ex-vivo rodent heart model reduces *in vivo* experimentation" to be found here:
http://www.forschung3r.ch/en/publications/bu40.html

Interested to form a new national platform in your country?
Please contact us (» contact section).

For an upfront info how to create a platform in your country, and which criteria to apply? See also the presentation of Jose Castell at the Stakeholder Workshop in Prague ECVAM/*ecopa* Stakeholder Workshop:

PDF: A guided tour to become full members/associate members in *ecopa* (200 kb)

All the abstracts of the following projects are to be found on the forum of the *ecopa* website, see the comment under II.1.

www.reprotect.eu

top

II.1.2. ReProTect

This 6th FP-project, that *ecopa* had co-initiated and in which *ecopa* is represented with 3 members in the Supervising Board including the Chairperson, was started in 2003 with 21 partners.

The overall funding is scheduled to be 9.1 mio EUR, resp. 13.5 mio EUR. Contract with the EU was signed on July 1, 2004; the administration is performed by Prof. Michael Schwarz, University of Tübingen.

II.1.2.1. Recent News

As part of the project, a review "of the Implementation of the Embryonic Stem Cell Test (EST)" has been published in ATLA, see publication section.

The next Supervising Board Meeting will be held on December7-8, 2009 in Ispra, Italy at ECVAM.

A brochure on the ongoing activities within ReProTect is available.
Go to the website here:

http://www.reprotect.eu/

Publishable executive summary 2008

A publishable executive summary for the year 2008 can be downloaded from the website:

http://www.reprotect.eu/index.php?id=11004

You find an informative flyer below, as well as the brochure presenting the first results.

PDF: ReProTect Brochure

PDF: ReProTect Flyer (320 kb)

ecopa is involved in the Board and the results dissemination.

www.acutetox.org

top

II.1.3. ACuteTox

II.1.3.1. Recent News

A list of all publications produced by the Consortium is available on the web site as well as the project structure and a profound overview. Link below.

The latest newsletter as of February 2008 can be read here:

http://www.acutetox.org/docs/Newsletter/acutetox_newsletter_3.pdf

http://www.acutetox.org

E-learning program for *in vitro* methods

The scientific coordinator of the FP6 project ACuteTox, Expertrådet, is producing an e-learning program for the testing strategy and the methods that will be the result of the project. To get a good implementation and a wide use of the *in vitro* methods it is important to make it convenient for the industry to use them. One way is to produce interactive manuals that make it possible to attain reproducible results with high and equal quality in all laboratories.

xpertrådet has developed a pedagogic model for an interactive manual within the ACuteTox project. The SOP text is supplemented with short video sequences, photos and drawings that clarifies critical phases of the test methods. Each test will be presented in three different levels: 1) an introduction level where the tests are presented briefly to demonstrate the opportunities of the test; 2) a second level with the SOPs of the tests and with video sequences or pictures that demonstrate how to carry through the tests; 3) in the third level the scientific documentation and background of the tests could be find. The second level is the main part of the e-learning program that will consist of the interactive manual.

This model could also be useful for the other FP6 projects within the *in vitro* area and it would certainly be convenient for the endusers if the e-learning programs from the different projects looked similar and had the same pedagogic model. Expertrådet is willing to assist other *in vitro* projects to produce similar e-learning programs.

Contact for more information: http://www.expertradet.se, http://www.acutetox.org
http://www.ecopa.eu/download.php?file=ACuteTox_e-learning_abstract.pdf

ACuteTox goes into a new phase

The testing within the ACuteTox project has been finalised and data has been quality checked. The data is now being analysed with partial least squares regression (PLS) analyses in order to find the combination of assays giving the best prediction. However, so far different combinations of basal cytotoxicity tests and specific tests only marginally improve the prediction compared to using basal cytotoxicity tests alone. By taking kinetic factors into account, the prediction could be approved further. The following four kinetic factors seem to be important: oral absorption, clearance, lipophilicity and protein binding. It has been concluded that further data analysis and data mining is needed before the construction of the testing strategy can be initiated. This data analysis and data mining will be carried out by an independent expert that has not been involved in the assay development and testing. These analyses have started in November 08.

www.sens-it-iv.eu

top

II.1.4. Sens-it-iv

Sens-it-iv is an integrated EU-funded research project (LSHB-CT-2005-018681)involving 28 partners, drawn from across Europe, of which 9 represent industry, 15 groups represent universities or research institutes, while 4 groups represent organizations. They are joined together by the common goal of developing alternative strategies to animal testing for the assessment of skin and/or respiratory sensitizing potential of chemicals. This includes the development of predictive *in vitro* methods.

ecopa is part of work package 9 and is responsible for "Technology transfer and Dissemination". Technology transfer and dissemination of project results, including knowledge, will be a key activity throughout the term of the Sens-it-iv project.

II.1.4.1. Recent News

ecopa has taken over the responsibility "spreading the news/results" of this EU project, and released a brochure covering the activities on behalf of Sens-it-iv, and supported the website creation. The folder and poster can be downloaded on the website www.sens-it-iv.eu, section press material. Technology transfer and dissemination of project results, including knowledge, will be a key activity throughout the term of the Sens-it-iv project.

The first Sens-it-iv Newsletter appeared on December 14, 2006 and now the 32nd edition is available via the website or the link below. The newsletter is coordinated by the WP9 leader.

The Sens-it-iv Newsletter Nr. 32 is out:

http://www.sens-it-iv.eu/content/newsletter.php

Newsletter-subscription possibility on the website.

The General Assembly has been held on October 5, 6 and 7, 2009, at Hotel Pueblo Acantilado, in El Campello near Alicante, Spain. A Summer school has been held from June 29th till July 2nd, 2009 with the title: practical and theoretical course on Sens-it-iv *in vitro* methods at the University of Applied Sciences HU, Utrecht, The Netherlands. The course was about theoretical and practical laboratory aspects of sensitization, pathology, cell culture models, data handling and experimental design.

A next Summer School will be organised in 2011. More information will be disseminated via the newsletters and the website.

PDF: Sens-it-iv - First publishable summary (114 kb)

PDF: Sens-it-iv - Publishable executive summary - 2nd year (80 kb)

http://www.biosim-network.net

top

II.1.5. BioSim

BioSim, or "Biosimulation A New Tool in Drug Development" started December 1, 2004. BioSim is a Network of Excellence supported by the European Commission as part of its 6th Framework Programme.

II.1.5.1. Recent News

The BioSim project is now ended. The final 5th BioSim Conference was held in Christiansborg, Copenhagen, from August 25 to 29, 2009, hosted by the Danish Parliament, and attended by about 160 participants.

The meeting, this time, covered other aspects than the scientific ones, which have been, however, the most relevant and interesting.

Presentations have been given by institutional and political representatives on the relevance of this project for the Danish institutions, in terms of international prestige, scientific and educational impact. From the University side, the relevance of interaction between natural and technical sciences has been stressed, as well as that between academia and industries. The challenge that universities are now facing is to prepare students for jobs which do not yet exists: thus there is a special need of economical but also cultural investment. A session has been devoted to "Biosimulation vis-a-vis the ethical and social issues of global drug development". Some lectures from Novo Nordisk A/S researchers and administrators on industrial research and social responsibility were given.

Moreover, the relevance gained by the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which implies a change in the attitudes of the Companies in relation to ethical "hot" issue, has been illustrated by an EU Commission representative. The EU-perspective is whereby companies may integrate societal and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with the stakeholder on voluntary basis. CSR, indeed, can be a tool that not only opens the dialogue among companies and the public at large, but also may have a positive feedback on the economy of the enterprise.

The main scientific session was dealing with "Biosimulation and model-based treatment of patients" and "Application of biosimulation in drug development". The final sessions were devoted to the use of biosimulation in the health sciences and to the most recent results of the BioSim project. The issue of why, where, and when the modelling should be applied has been widely debated: still more rational approaches are needed, together with semantic clarification concerning f.i. the very concept of "system". Moreover, it should not be forgotten that modelling may start from data and not from a hypothesis and, thus, data source, mining etc., is of extreme importance. The Virtual Human and Personalised Medicine have been recurrent topics, which may look, at glance, still very far away technological goals, but scientific approaches such as biosimulation of complex system, makes them thinkable, and even feasible, in a not too far future.

It goes without saying that much appreciation has been expressed for the outstanding scientific guidance of Erik Mosekilde, which, from now on, will act as counsellor of any future plan, and for Anne Marie Clemensen, who made such a wide network to work easily and friendly, coping at the same time with the expected time schedule and administrative issues.

The principal Scientific Officer of the BioSim, presenting the next calls in the area of predictive medicine, provided ideas and information about future possibilities for this network, or at least part of it, to continue its successful journey…and we are sure that this would be the case.

Liintop

top

II.1.6. Liintop

II.1.6.1. Recent News

Structure of the project, information on partner and new on events can be taken from the website:

http://www.liintop.cnr.it/index.php?PG=events&action=events

carcinoGENOMICS

top

II.1.7. carcinoGENOMICS

carcinoGENOMICS is an Integrated FP6 Project financially supported by the European Commission (LSHB-CT-2006-037712).19 groups are present of which 6 represent industry, 11 represent universities or research institutes, while 2 groups represent organizations.

II.1.7.1. Recent News

PDF: CarcinoGENOMICS Press Release (24 kb)

A workshop was organized by the carcinoGENOMICS project, the subject is 'Genomics in Cancer Risk Assessment'. It took place on August 27 - 28, 2009 on San Servolo Island, Venice, Italy. This was a parallel Satellite Workshop to the 10th International Conference on Environmental Mutagens (ICEM), on Augustus 20 - 25, 2009 in Firenze and the VIIth World Congress on Alternatives & Animal Use in the Life Sciences, on August 30 – September 3, 2009 in Rome, Italy.

PDF: CarcinoGENOMICS Workdhop Programme (225 kb)

At this workshop on Genomics in Cancer Risk Assessment the state-of-affairs in chemical cancer risk assessment was explored and the possible contribution of genomics and systems toxicology with respect to tackling the current flaws and uncertainties were discussed. Most importantly, the organizers were successful in bringing together leading experts from academia, industry and regulatory authorities for this. They were also able to identify the road lying ahead: by taking the systems toxicology approach, generating mechanistic information on toxic responses from bioassays consisting of human cells, and linking this with growing insights in molecular processes underlying human pathophysiologies.

For more information:

http://www.hesiglobal.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=3432

The next carcinoGENOMICS Board Meeting and Annual Meeting will be held in Barcelona/Spain on November 11-13, 2009. *ecopa* took over the dissemination, *ecopa*-members presenting.

MPIMG publishes a book on systems biology methods

In this book that was partly funded within carcinoGENOMICS, basic tools and methodologies for analysing biological networks are described. The intended readership of the book are students and lecturers but also advanced researchers.

Details:
Klipp E, Liebermeister W, Wierling C, Kowald A, Lehrach H, Herwig R (2009) Systems biology - a textbook. Wiley-VCH Weinheim. In press.
Publisher's website advertisement:

http://www.wiley-vch.de/publish/en/books/bySubjectLS00/ISBN3-527-31874-7/

II. 2. EU 7th Framework Programme Projects, Initiatives and Technology Platforms

top

SusChem

top

II.2.1. Sustainable Chemistry (SusChem)

The Technology Platform SusChem has been formed and finalized its Implementation Action Plan. The action plan can be downloaded from the SusChem website.

http://www.suschem.org/

SusChem newsletter #12 is now online:

http://www.suschem.org/content.php?pageId=3739

A detailed review of the SusChem platform activities can be found in a supplement of the September 22 issue (2008) of the ICIS Chemical Business.

II.2.2. Regulations of the 7th Framework Programme

Update 7th EU RTD- Framework Programme

Though intended as part of the EU-competitive efforts in Research and Development, the EU still is behind its own targets laid down in the Lisbon Strategy. According to the EU statistics officer, the 27 EU states invested in 2006 as much (or little) as in the year before, i.e. 210 billion EURO equivalent to 1.84% of its economical output. Lisbon asks for 3% in 2010.

Guidance on FP7 implementation

A number of guidance documents and preparatory work are carried out by the European Commission in view to install the basis of the FP7 implementation. The following documents are available for consultation on http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.html where they can also be downloaded:
- a standard Model Grant Agreement,
- a draft Guide for Beneficiaries,
- a draft Guide to Financial Issues,
- a draft Guide to IPR and
- a draft Checklist for the Consortium Agreement.

ecopa is interested to participate with partners in some of the calls dealing with alternative methods and being announced in the future, esp within the HEALTH resp. the ENVIRONMENT sectors of the 7th FRP.

START-UP

top

II.2.3. START-UP

ecopa submitted a proposal for a Support Action in the HEALTH-2007-1.3-2 call: Bottlenecks in reduction, refinement and replacement of animal testing in pharmaceutical discovery and development. The proposal is called **"Scientific and technological issues in 3Rs alternatives research in the process of drug development and Union politics"** with the acronym: **START-UP**. Several NCPs are collaborating in this project. The project was approved "Grant Agreement" No. 201187 and signed on March, 12, 2008. Project no. LSHB 201187.

II.2.3.1. The Abstract of the proposal

The **START-UP** project is concerned with the identification and proposals to abolish bottlenecks in the 3Rs approach in pharmaceutical discovery and development. The goal of the project is the organisation of 3 **Workshops** in order to determine a) the state of the art of each of the 3Rs in the EU, b) to assess European strength and gaps in 3Rs and c) the identification of rate limiting steps on the political, scientific, technological level. As a result, a Consensus Paper containing the concepts and suggestions for a Roadmap for future research will be produced.

Stakeholders (among them European Pharmaceutical Industries (EPI)) have identified bottlenecks in drug development and in the integration of *in vitro* methods Early identification of wrong candidates for further development and avoiding efforts for under-performing candidates, are essential for the competitiveness of European Industry. Identification of bottlenecks in the implementation of reduction, refinement and replacement of animal experimentation in drug R&D, should assist in identifying the best *in vitro* and *in vivo* systems, and to speed up the drug development process. Existing hurdles in the scientific, technological, political and environmental level (including regulatory), play a substantial role and are rate-limiting in developing new drugs, including biological entities (almost 50% of the currently developed products).

ecopa (the quadripartite umbrella NGO for alternatives) structures with its VUB partner this support action around 3 major workshops which was preceded by 3 Expert Meetings redefining and prioritising current bottlenecks in 3Rs methodology; with EPI, drug discovery and development. Each phase has its own specific needs, and analysing the present limitations and gaps needs to be addressed, e.g., many cell systems do not yet have the required stability for genomics, proteomics or metabonomics analysis; many current *in vitro* cell systems lack crucial bioactivation capability. Consequently, the status of satisfactory "predictive" pharmacology and toxicology *in vitro* has not yet been reached.

In terms of politics and ethical concerns, considerable differences in regard to the use and development of transgenic animals, human tissues and stem cells create an atmosphere of insecurity for an effective academia and industry cooperation.

The final goal of this action is a Consensus Document that analyses present status.

Details of the project were presented by the Chair of *ecopa* on the occasion of the 11th Linz Alternative Congress, September 28-30, 2007.

NEWS:
The first major workshop of the START-UP project, on Refinement, was held in Rome, Italy, at the L'Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) on February 26-27, 2009. The second workshop, on Reduction, has been held on July 3-4, 2009, in Innsbruck, Austria. The third workshop, on Replacement, was held on October 2-3, in Budapest, Hungary.

At the moment, reports are being prepared for editing the final report to be supplied to the European Commission, by the end of February, 2010.

ESNATS

top

II.2.4. ESNATS

Project acronym: ESNATS
Project full title: Embryonic Stem cell-based Novel Alternative Testing Strategies
Grant agreement no.: FP7 - 201619.

The aim of the ESNATS project is to develop a novel "all-in-one" toxicity test platform based on embryonic stem cells (ESCs), in particular human ESCs, to accelerate drug development, reduce R&D costs and propose a powerful alternative to animal tests in the spirit of the "Three R principle". ESNATS objectives will be achieved in a 5 year multi-disciplinary collaboration of leading European researchers in alternative testing, toxicology, ESC research, genomics, modelling, and automation. The consortium will also include representatives from regulatory bodies, the pharmaceutical industry and ethical advisors to

provide guidance to ensure rapid applicability of the developed test systems.

ecopa has taken over some tasks in disseminating results of this project, developed the logo, and is leading the respective workpackage.

NEWS:
Last esnats-Board Meeting and Summer School took place on Sept. 23-24, 2009 in Zermatt/CH.
The upcoming esnats General Meeting is scheduled for April 26-28, 2010 in Ispra/Italy.
Esnats-website: http://www.esnats.eu

Miscellaneous

top

III.1. Events

III.1.1. *ecopa* events

III.1.1.1. 10th Annual *ecopa* Workshop

The future *ecopa* Annual Meetings will be:
10th: November 28-29, 2009
11th: end of November 2010

III.1.1.2. *ecopa* Board meeting

The next *ecopa* Board meetings:
- Dates will be set after the 10th Annual *ecopa* Workshop

eSI - *ecopa* Science Initiative

top

III.1.1.3. eSI: *ecopa* Science initiative

The eSI-Conference under the general heading: "Reaching the young scientist" is an initiative organised by *ecopa* aimed at bringing together senior as well as young researchers to discuss about the new technologies and their applicability in '*in vitro*' research as well as to improve creativity and innovation in the search for alternative methods. *ecopa* had performed a detailed literature analysis of the last 5 years of research in alternative methods and had concluded that this area of applied research is drying out.

The full report, presentations, and the final program are listed on the *ecopa* website in the archive section.

NEWS: The latest workshop has taken place in Pueblo Acantilado; Alicante, Spain on October 16-19, 2008, with the attendance of senior scientists and young researchers of 14 countries. It focussed on "Recent developments and potentially novel approaches of science to alternative testing of cosmetics and pharmaceuticals". It was held together with the European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing, EPAA.

New aspects of pharmaceutical and cosmetic research are covered also in regard to the START-UP project. Sponsoring was provided by Badecos/Rogiers, Bayer, set and EPAA.

Presentations and photographs:

- Presentations of the eSI Meeting
- Photos of the eSI Meeting

III.1.2. other events

III.1.2.1. 18th International Congress of the European Association on Tissue Banks
November 4-6, 2009 in Cracow, Poland

The 18th Annual Congress of the European Association of Tissue Banks, is being held in Cracow, Poland from the 4th – 6th November 2009. The meeting will comprise plenary sessions with renowned experts on: European regulation and its implementation, Vigilance & Surveillance, Irradiation, TSE's including vCJD and Skin grafts. There will also be free paper presentations -awards for best poster, best presentation and also the Professor Anna Dziedzic-Goclawska Award for Novice Investigators.

For more information:
» http://www.eatb2009.com

III.1.2.2. EPAA 2009 Annual Conference
November 6, 2009 at the Charlemagne Building, Brussels, Belgium

The EPAA is a partnership between the European Commission and industry from seven sectors, all committed to joining forces for the promotion of the 3Rs in regulatory testing. This year, in particular dissemination of 3Rs will be addressed, including issues such as: The role that dissemination plays or should play in advancing research into 3Rs, sharing good practice, enhancing (international) regulatory acceptance and improving uptake of 3Rs techniques, Information needs and information gaps and the most efficient dissemination mechanisms.

For more information:
» http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/epaa/4_2_conf_2009.htm

III.1.2.3. IVTIP 21C Autumn Meeting - Toxicology in the 21st century - working our way towards a visionary reality
November 26, 2009 at the Hotel Ter Elst, Edegem, Belgium

With this meeting IVTIP wants to actively contribute to driving this vision towards a practical tool that is broadly applicable for toxicity testing. This objective will be pursued by addressing the following issues:
- The concerns, needs and expectations living within various industries and regulatory authorities with respect to this visionary strategy;
- The technological reality and its capability (or lack thereof) to support this vision.

For more information:
» http://www.ivtip.org/

III.1.2.4. 2nd Annual: Immunogenicity 2009:Assessing the Risk and Clinical Relevance of Immunogenicity in Biotherapeutics Development
January 14–15, 2010 in Barcelona, Spain

This marcus evans conference offers the environment for benchmarking and networking with thought-leading researchers in immunogenicity. Scientists from pharmaceutical and biotech companies present industry case studies and new academic findings, while representatives of regulatory agencies give updates and answer questions from the audience.

For more information:
» http://www.marcusevans.com/html/eventdetail.asp?eventID=15911&SectorID=31

III.1.2.5. 2nd International Conference on Drug Discovery and Therapy
February 1–4, 2010 in Dubai, UAE

The 2nd ICDDT 2010 will highlight cutting-edge advances in all major disciplines of Drug Discovery and Drug Therapy. This four-day event will feature recent findings from leading industrial, clinical and academic experts in the field, in the form of lectures and posters. The 2nd ICDDT 2010 will promote the translational nature of modern biomedical research, with an equal number of speakers/participants those who are basic scientists in drug discovery and those who are medical doctors associated with direct patient care and research.

For more information:
» http://www.icddt-dd.com

III.1.2.6. i-SUP2010: Innovation for Sustainable Production 2010
April 18-21, 2010 in Bruges, Belgium

I-SUP2010 will focus on the intertwining of all those disciplines involved in sustainable development taking into account societal, technological and scientific issues in a broad and integrated range of domains. I-SUP2010 invites you to discuss with all stakeholders involved in this process by combining six international congresses at the same time and the same location, each aimed at a specific target audience of industry leaders, universities, research institutes and decision makers covering such fields as:
Sustainable production, Sustainable chemistry, Sustainable energy, Materials for sustainable Production, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and In vitro methods replacing animal testing (CARDAM).

For more information:
» http:// www.i-sup2010.org

III.2. Awards and Publications

III.2.1. Booklet on Alternative Testing Strategies

The European Commission has published a booklet on all European FP6-projects concerned with alternative testing.

You can download it from this link:
» http://www.carcinogenomics.eu/files/public/home/alternative-test-strat_en.pdf

III.2.2. Catalogue on: Applications of Toxicogenomic Technologies to Predictive Toxicology and Risk Assessment

In recent years, completion of the sequencing of the human genome as well as the genomes of dozens of other organisms and subsequent development of tools for comprehensive analysis of other cellular constituents have revolutionized biology. These new technologies, referred to broadly as "genomics," have integrated biologic sciences with information sciences and engineering. The application of these new technologies to toxicology has opened a new era in which genetic variation and expression signatures might be used to screen compounds for hazard identification, to assess cellular responses to different doses, to classify toxicants on the basis of mechanisms of action, to monitor exposure of individuals to toxicants, and to predict individual variability in sensitivity to toxicants. In pharmacology, these technologies have been used both to detect desired cellular responses to drugs and to monitor potential toxicity.

You can download the catalogue from this link:
» http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12037.html

III.2.3. Dieter Lütticken Award 2009

Candidates should give full contact details, co-operation partners, an executive summary of the studies and an argumentation why they should be taken into consideration, a publications list related to the studies and a selection of copies of those publications which give a good overview of the work.

For application forms please contact:
Intervet Global Communications Animal Health, Boxmeer, The Netherlands
(communications@intervet.com.
This year's deadline is November 15, 2009

The document is available here:
» http://www.intervet.com/news/2009-04-07-dieter-luetticken-award-announced.aspx

III.2.4. EPAA Newsletter September 2009

The EPAA Newsletter of September 2009 is available now. You can read it here:
» http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/epaa/5_news/epaa_newsletter_200909.pdf

III.2.5. NC3Rs Newsletter 23 (September 2009)

The 23rd edition of the NC3Rs-newsletter (September 2009) is available now. You can subscribe for this here:
» http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/signup-newsletters.asp

III.2.6. EFSA published an opinion on the replacement, reduction and refinement of animal testing

Existing approaches incorporating replacement, reduction and refinement of animal testing: applicability in food and feed risk assessment.

The founding Regulation of EFSA requires the Authority to contribute to a high level of protection of human life and health, and in this respect to take account of animal health and welfare. EFSA is committed to a proactive animal welfare approach, based on sound scientific principles and the need to ensure that adequate data are available for a reliable risk assessment. In this context, EFSA and its Scientific Committee recognise the importance to stimulate the use of food and feed assessment approaches that would not only minimise the number of experimental animals and any suffering, but also work towards their replacement.

For the full text:
» http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1211902559349.htm

III.2.7. Toxicity testing gets a makeover

The European Commission has revealed details of a major new research programme to develop a modern, high-throughput approach to repeat-dose toxicity testing.

For the full text:
» http://www.nature.com/news/2009/090908/full/461158a.html

III.2.8. Article in Altex: Research Expenditure for 3R Alternatives

Title: A Review of National Public Funding Programmes in European Countries Authors: Tonia Devolder, Kirsty Reid, Vera Rogiers, Simon Webb and David Wilkins Summary: A survey of publicly funded research specifically targeting alternatives to animal testing was conducted over 2006/2007. Responses were received from 16 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom). The responses were compiled by national agencies or national consensus platforms. The current annual total across the 16 countries was estimated as € 17 million. The largest contribution came from Germany with € 4.6 million (27% of the total). Also collated was information on the existence of a national strategy on alternatives research, the focus of any such strategies, the research priority setting process, stakeholder consultation in that process, project funding preferences or limits, coordination mechanisms and the separation of responsibilities of competent authorities (i.e. for research support, laboratory animal welfare and chemicals management). Countries with national strategies (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK) are skewed towards the higher end of the spending distribution. These 6 countries account for over € 12 million, i.e. >70% of the overall total of national spending identified. Most countries have national consensus platforms. These should help to both stimulate stakeholder consultation and further national spending on alternatives research. The situation regarding the separation of responsibilities of competent authorities (i.e. for research support, laboratory animal welfare and chemicals management) is mixed. A degree of overlap exists in many cases. A research strategy that is receptive to and reflects regulatory developments – such as REACh with its marked resultant increase in animal use – is an obvious need that is as yet unmet in many of the countries surveyed. The need for a mechanism to collate details of active research projects within Europe as a whole was also identified.

For more information:
» http://www.altex.ch/en/index.html?id=50&iid=101

III.2.9. Stem cells online journal

For more information:
» http://www.stemcellsportal.com

III.2.10. A Review of the Implementation of the Embryonic Stem Cell Test (EST)

The report and recommendations of the ECVAM/ReProTect Workshop organized in May 2008 in Frankfurt/Germany were published recently in ATLA 37, 313–328, 2009.

III.3. Calls and Vacancies

III.3.1. Open Call for the Expression of Interest in membership in ECVAM's Scientific Advisory Committe (ESAC)

The European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM), hosted by the Institute for Health and Consumer Protection (IHCP) of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), has launched an Open call for the renewal of its Scientific Advisory Structure. The "Open Call for the Expression of Interest" is directed to generalist scientific experts from the area of life and environmental sciences, medicine, chemistry, or toxicology. The Committee shall cover a wide range of experience, including testing, validation of test methods, risk assessment/risk management of chemical substances. The 19 ESAC members will be in charge of advising ECVAM on all scientific aspects of its work and in particular with regard to the scientific validity of methods that would replace, reduce or refine animal experiments. Experts should come from industry, regulatory agencies and administrations, academia, or other interested social groups, i.e. all relevant stakeholder communities, but will be appointed to ESAC ad personam and must act independently when serving in ESAC. Up to 4 ESAC members might come from non-EU countries.

All relevant information including the application procedure can be found on http://ecvam.jrc.ec.europa.eu/index.htm

Deadline for application was September 30, 2009.

III.3.2. 4th call of the EC Seventh RTD Framework Programme

This call will address the replacement of animal tests in repeated dose systemic toxicity testing, through the topic HEALTH.2010.4.2-9 "Towards the replacement of repeated dose systemic toxicity testing in human safety assessment", of the Health Programme. The topic might be of interest to you and your project partners. It is strongly supported by industry and in particular by The European Cosmetics Association (COLIPA). More information about additional funding possibilities may be obtained from the COLIPA's website (www.colipa.eu) and in the enclosed COLIPA's leaflet. It is important to note that the funding modalities differ from the standard FP7 funding schemes.

This information is also available here:
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html

III.3.3. ERC-starting grants call open for GRANTS PhD-holders (2 to 10 years PhD-holder)

NEW CALL + NEW ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
The ERC- European Research Council has launched its 3rd call for ERC Starting Grants (ERC 2010-StG).

Deadlines:
- Physical Sciences & Engineering Domain (Panels PE1 - PE10) Deadline: October 28, 2009
- Life Sciences Domain (Panels LS1 - LS9) Deadline: November 18, 2009, 17.00 (Brussels local time)
- Social Sciences & Humanities Domain (Panels SH1 - SH6) Deadline: December 9, 2009, 17.00 (Brussels local time)

Budget: EUR 528 237 600 (indicative)

More info + Details:
Call Identifiers:
§ http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=284
§ http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=285
§ http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7DetailsCallPage&call_id=286

Work Programme:
§ http://www.ukro.bbsrc.ac.uk/erc/application_info/wp/090804_wp10_v2.pdf
2010 ERC Work Programme (.pdf) (updated version dated 29/07/09, published on 04/08/09 (the only page that has changed since the first version published on 30/07/09 is the cover page)

Call Fiche:
§ http://www.ukro.bbsrc.ac.uk/erc/application_info/calls/090730_stg10_call.pdf
ERC-2010-StG (.pdf) (30/07/09)

Guide for Applicants:
§ http://www.ukro.bbsrc.ac.uk/erc/application_info/guides/090804_stg2010_gfa_v1.pdf
Guide for Applicants (.pdf) (dated July 2009, published 04/08/09)

Who can apply ?
Eligible Researcher ("Principal Investigator")
§ The ERC actions are open to researchers of any nationality who would like to establish their research activity in any Member State as well as any Associated Country.
§ The Principal Investigator can be of any age and nationality and he/she can reside in any country in the world at the time of the application.
§ The objective of the ERC-STG is to provide critical and adequate support to the independent careers of excellent researchers.
§ The ERC Starting Grant Principal Investigator must have been awarded his/her first PhD (or equivalent doctoral degree) at least 2 and up to 10 years prior to the publication date of the call for proposals of the ERC Starting Grant = 30/07/2009).
§ Principal Investigators are sub-divided during evaluation in two main streams, with applicants being awarded their PhD at least 2 and no more than 6 years (broadly described as "starters") or over 6 but no more than 10 years (broadly described as "consolidators") prior to the call publication.
§ Extensions of this period may be allowed only in case of eligible career breaks which must be properly documented: maternity (18 months per child born before or after the PhD award) & paternity leave (accumulation of actual time off for children born before or after the PhD award) and leave taken for long-term illness, national service. Leave taken for unavoidable statutory reasons (e.g. clinical qualifications) may also count as an extension. The cumulative eligibility period should not in any case surpass 14.5 years following the award of the first PhD. No allowance will be made for part-time working (2 years of half-time working count as 2 full-time years).

Eligible Scientific Fields
§ Applications may be made in any field of research:
§ Funding of human embryonic stem cell research will be possible within the ethical framework defined in the EC 7th Framework Programme7 as well as the Ideas Specific Programme.

Submission:

Electronic and single submission of full proposal

Evaluation procedure

The evaluation will take place in 2 steps following the single submission of a full proposal.
Step 1: Following the submission of the proposal, Section 1 of the proposal will be assessed and marked
Step 2 : The complete version of the retained proposals will be assessed and ranked by the panels during of the evaluation.

More information:
http://rd-ir.vub.ac.be/en_GB/pages/research-funding or contact mfollet@vub.ac.be

III.3.4. ECVAM is renewing its Scientific Advisory Structure: Two Open Calls for Scientists

The European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) is currently renewing its Scientific Advisory Structure.

In the context of this renewal (more details below), ECVAM is publishing Two Open Calls for the Expression of Interest addressed to experts in life and environmental sciences, medicine, chemistry, toxicology, test method and test strategy validation, risk assessment and scientists knowledgeable in other areas such as statistics, biometry, epidemiology, modelling approaches.

The first call is dedicated to the new **ECVAM Scientific Advisory Committee (ESAC)**. The 19 ESAC members, preferably senior scientists with a generalist profile, will be in charge of advising ECVAM on all scientific aspects of its work and in particular with regard to the scientific validity of methods which replace, reduce or refine animal experiments. **Deadline for submitting an expression of interest in the ESAC was September 30, 2009.**

The second call concerns the formation of an **ECVAM Expert Pool (EEP)**, supporting ECVAM's mission through direct expert advice to ECVAM and ESAC, e.g. through their participation in ESAC Working Groups, task forces or workshops. Preference will be given to experts with profound specialist knowledge in one or few areas. The call will be published mid September. **No deadline is foreseen at present.**

All relevant information including the application procedure can be found on:
http://ecvam.jrc.ec.europa.eu/index.htm

III.3.5. ECVAM launches an open call for tender

Phase III — Prevalidation of the 3 methods subdivided into 3 lots: lot 1 - Direct Peptide Reactivity Assay (DPRA); lot 2 - Myeloid U937 Skin Sensitisation Test (MUSST); lot 3 - human Cell Line Activation Test (hCLAT).

The Institute for Health and Consumer Protection (IHCP) has launched an open call for tender, for ECVAM of the In Vitro Methods Unit. The aim of the call is to invite laboratories to participate in the initial phase (phase III prevalidation) of the evaluation of three test methods designed for the assessment of the skin sensitisation potential of substances. The three methods are: 1) the Direct Peptide Reactivity Assay, 2) the Myeloid U937 Skin Sensitisation Test (MUSST) and 3) the human Cell Line Activation Test (h-CLAT). Within this project the selected laboratories will work in close contact with multinational companies as well as the European Commission's Joint Research Centre.

Access to the official notice available from the Tenders Electronic Daily Homepage:
http://ecvam.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ft_doc/Service_contract_Contract_notice_239612-2009_EN.pdf

Deadline for submitting offers: October 13, 2009

Contact Address:
Further information including the relevant tender documents can be obtained from
JRC-IHCP-PROCUREMENT@ec.europa.eu Tel: +39-0332-789197; Fax: +39-0332-789434

III.3.6. New Grant Applications invited now by Dr. Hadwen Trust

The Dr Hadwen Trust is currently inviting new grant applications for research proposals to develop, validate or implement non-animal methods which contribute to the replacement of animal experiments in medical research. There is a total budget of £400,000 on offer for proposals directed at replacing the use of living animals in current procedures. For fuller details see webpage:
http://www.scienceroom.org/apply-for-funding

III.3.7. Tierschutzforschungspreis – Ausschreibung BMELV / Call by the German Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Consumerhealth: 29th Award of Animal Health Research

Deadline: March 31, 2010

Details (in German only) here:
http://www.bmelv.de/SharedDocs/Standardartikel/Landwirtschaft/Tier/Tierschutz/Tierschutzpreis-Ausschreibung29.html

III.4 VARIA

III.4.1. Countries Unite to Reduce Animal Use in Product Toxicity Testing Worldwide

U.S., Canada, Japan and European Union Sign International Agreement
Representatives from four international agencies, including the director of the U.S. National Toxicology Program (NTP), today signed a memorandum of cooperation that could reduce the number of animals required for consumer product safety testing worldwide. The agreement between the United States, Canada, Japan and the European Union will yield globally coordinated scientific recommendations on alternative toxicity testing methods that should speed their adoption in each of these countries, thus reducing the number of animals needed for product safety testing.

The memorandum is available at:
» http://iccvam.niehs.nih.gov/docs/about_docs/ICATM-MOC.pdf

The press release can be found here:
» http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/releases/2009/pttw.cfm

III.4.2. CAAT 3Rs Centers website

Across the globe, organizations are working to reduce, refine, and replace animal experiments. You can search for these organization by the map, by name, keywords, or by associated tags. This database is provided and maintained by The Johns Hopkins University Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing (CAAT).

For more information:
» http://caat.jhsph.edu/international_alternatives/

III.4.3. ALARMTOX - Aquatic biotoxin detection methods

The mouse bioassay (MBA), developed by Yasumoto et al. (1978), is one of the currently used analytical methods for lipophilic toxin detection in shellfish. Despite being a useful surveillance tool for consumer protection, the method presents obvious ethical problems. Moreover, sensitivity is sometimes insufficient to detect toxin levels at the EU regulatory limit values and the whole process requires long analysis times; false negative and false positive results have also been reported.

ALARMTOX project has been started. The main objective is to develop assays and biosensors for the detection of aquatic biotoxins (marine and continental waters).

For more information:
» http://www.alarmtox.net