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We are happy to have smoothly started the EUGeneHeart project

This is the first issue of our EUGeneHeart (EGH) Newsletter. First of all, we would like to thank all of you who helped to realize the challenging idea behind EGH and made come alive, what had been written on paper before. For us and maybe for all of you EGH, has become an integral part of our day to day lifes. Why do we need a newsletter? To answer the following questions within our consortium – and to share our findings with the outside world:

- *What are we doing?*
- *What ambitious goals do we have?*
- *Where do we go from here?*
- *Why are we doing so?*
- *Who will benefit from our activities?*
- *Which are our timelines?*
- *How to contact us?*
- *Last but not least: Who are we?*

You all helped to give birth to EGH and we would like to let you know that our baby is developing quite well. We started to walk. First milestones have been successfully passed, the matrix structure has been established and yielded initial results, the training initiative has been set up, a first training course has been given, our webpage was developed, EGH members started to meet each other to exchange their latest knowledge, video and telephone conferences were held, the newsletter was born, in the meantime EGH members gave rise to nearly 20 publications, ...

Besides all the light there must be shadow as well – and indeed we also have sad news. A request to fund our Training Initiative and beyond was very positively evaluated, but finally refused. Unfortunately, one of the Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) within our consortium filed for bankruptcy and therefore needs to be replaced. But the remaining gap also provides us with a big opportunity. We have to stop for a moment to revise what we are doing. We are left with the opportunity to actually improve and develop EGH a bit further by looking out for a new partner who will complement all our activities better than the last SME, though we previously chose them, since we were convinced they would match perfectly.

Constant change is an imperative characteristic of all vital processes, so let us make it an integral part of all our future decisions within and throughout the complete EGH project. The coming General Assembly in Stockholm will be such an opportunity for all of us to bring up novel ideas, discuss a wide number of opportunities and to decide upon how we would like to shape our future. Everybody of us is requested to hand in drafts, proposals and notes prior the coming meeting, so that we draw from this pool full of ideas and virtually can live this vital atmosphere.

Again, on behalf of our coordinator Gerd Hasenfuss, we would like to thank everybody of you for making it all come true – you can make the difference. Hopefully, this Newsletter finds your interest – we would be very delighted to receive your feedback.



EUGeneHeart Newsletter is issued by

EUGeneHeart Project office
Tel.: +49 (0) 551 388586
Fax: +49 (0) 551 392953

Georg-August-University of Göttingen
Faculty of Medicine and University Hospital
Department of Cardiology and Pneumology
Robert-Koch-Strasse 40
37075 Göttingen
Germany

EUGeneHeart - European Excellence project for heart research

The biggest heart research project ever promoted by the European Union started its job in January 2006. The EUGeneHeart (EGH) titled project will be led by Prof. Dr. Gerd Hasenfuss, managing director of the department of Cardiology and Pneumology and also leader of the Heart Centre of the University of Göttingen.

In EGH scientists from 20 institutions located in 10 countries are searching in common for reasons and possibilities for a better treatment of heart failure. The "integrated project" will be supported with a sum of 11,4 million Euros for a period of 5 years.

Heart failure is one of the most frequent diseases and in Europe at about 4 millions of humans are affected. The patients are suffering from limited ability to cope with physical stress and lack on air, there may be a clear reduced lifespan. Heart attack, high blood pressure and valvular defect are main reasons for heart failure. Out of that reason abnormal changes of heart will lead to heart failure.

Aim of this research project is to find out the molecular mechanism leading to these changes and to develop new treatments. This network research will be supported by three innovative industrial enterprises. "We expect by this project new findings for prevention of heart failure and the improved treatment on our patients suffering on heart failure", says Prof. Dr. Hasenfuss, coordinator of the project.

Another aim of the project is the expert training of young physicians in heart research.

The administration of the EU-Liaison Office of Human Medicine of the University will be directed by Christiane Hennecke. The opening of the symposium took place on January, 13th and 14th in Klinikum of the University of Göttingen under cooperation of the European Commission.

EUGeneHeart launched its webpage

EGH can be reached in the internet under the following link: www.eugeneheart.com

This website was created during the first months of the project and was launched in April this year. It provides a general project overview and informs a wider public about our goals and achievements.

The webpage is expected to be a vital place, which will be frequently updated with news

about our achievements and offers, e.g. open positions, training courses etc.

In addition to the public web appearance, an internal section for EGH members is available after logging-in. This internal site contains confidential information and is intended to become a lively platform for communication, facilitating information exchange and is providing an overview of the complete project status. Here you find:

- latest news related to our consortium
- complete contact information of all EGH participants
- message board to be used by everyone will be developed if necessary
- direct link to the Milliarium platform, an attractive tool to keep ourselves on track
- agendas and protocols of past and future meetings
- technical protocols for actual work direct on the bench
- all forms, logos and documents needed
- copies of the contracts with the EU
- FAQ

Please, help to develop this member site by sending suggestions and material directly to the Project Office. Any contribution from your side would be highly appreciated – everybody within EGH would be grateful for your novel and challenging ideas, reports and more.

Training course on minimally invasive transversal aortic banding (TAC) – March, 20. - 31. 2006

The department of Cardiology and Pneumology at University Hospital Göttingen has offered training sessions on the technique on minimally invasive transversal aortic banding (MTAB) March, 20. - 31. 2006.

First of all we would like to thank all participants for their large attendance on this training session, coming from all over Europe to Göttingen. The 12 participants - four of them were women - were highly pleased with the training and the way of imparting the knowledge.

The training sessions have easily exceeded all expectations. The participants have learned an innovative method, which not only needs now to be established in their own labs, but also is a further step in orchestrating cardiac research, which might hopefully yield new solutions for heart related diseases.

We would like to share an excerpt from an E-mail: "... thank you all for the superb organisation, training and hospitality during the visit by members of my laboratory last week which they found extremely useful and also very enjoyable. They were full of praise and enthusiasm on their return! We are most grateful."

Furthermore, many participants stated that it would be a great pleasure attending further session trainings of this kind with another main focus in future. The Training Initiative provides numerous of such opportunities.

Training Initiative already starts this year

EGH aim is the discovery of new treatments and prevention approaches for heart failure. In addition to research activities, this project also includes training activities to exchange knowledge/ technologies among consortium laboratories and among their young scientists. The training courses will ultimately serve as a basis for establishing a Pan-European training program in specific areas of cardiovascular biology and medicine beyond EGH, promoting the integration of recent advances in basic science into daily medical applications.

For managing its training activities the EGH consortium designated the Dissemination and Training Panel (DTP) to carry out the practical organization. The DTP consists of the chairperson Prof. Dr. J.-L. Balligand from the University of Louvain in Belgium, supported by an assistant and supervised by a Scientific Committee. The Scientific Committee is composed of experts from diverse fields related to cardiological research, which ensures the quality of the provided training activities.

The advertising booklet will be launched 08.09.2006. It contains practical informations about the first EGH training courses. In this booklet one can find information about the practical training, training modules and training sites. Detailed information about each course is listed in the "Training courses" section. Finally, a monthly timetable and application forms are included.

The training package contains four training modules in total:

- a. Generation and validation of heart failure models
- b. Thorough phenotypic characterization of *in vivo* models

- c. Assays for studying signalling pathways
- d. Clinical cardiology

Six consortium laboratories located in Berlin, Göttingen, Leuven, Maastricht, Paris, and Utrecht, lead the way by establishing instruction sites to host the EGH trainings. This is only the beginning of our Training Initiative, in the end every party – lab or SME – might be requested to offer training courses. This is not only expected to be burden and strain for the organising party, but this is actually a challenge strengthening and deepening our Pan-European network. We will make the difference by orchestrating our training and research activities.

Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses

A challenging training program needs sound funding, so the Dissemination and Training Panel (DTP) assisted to apply for a Human Resources and Mobility Activity Grant (HRM) under the Marie Curie actions Conferences and Training Courses (SCF). The actual application text can be downloaded from the internal section of our homepage under downloads.

The StateOfHeart (SOH) program integrating theoretical and practical courses, workshops and conferences to be held all over Europe was planned to facilitate the education in the field of cardiology. The proposal was evaluated in the meantime and assessed very positively and passed the quality threshold as well. However, our request for support has been rejected due to the high number of requests and little funding available. There were 351 eligible proposals, approx. 60 % of them passed the quality threshold but only less than 10 % of them will be funded.

We would like to thank all of you and the contributing institutes for all your efforts and support spent, and for the excellent cooperation. The DTP is now seeking for alternative sources of funding, since the SOH program is worth to be realized, without any concessions to unravel its full potential. The Training Initiative outlined above is just one facet of the complete SOH program.

The Matrix has been started successfully

All procedures needed for our Matrix approach have been established in the meantime. Matrix Materials are going to be sent to the expected recipients by the beginning of next year. In the meantime the GP91Phox model provided by Prof. Dr. Ajay Shah from King's

College London, UK has already arrived at Göttingen and is going to be expanded until the beginning of the year 2007 prior entering the Matrix.

Brief outline on how to publish EUGeneHeart results

The publication of scientific achievements is one of our first and foremost duties within EGH justifying the funding spent. Until now, nearly 20 publications from EGH members have been sent to the consortium to finally request clearance by the Steering Committee. Besides this impressive figure of publications every now and then it turns out, that the procedure of handing-in publication still remains unclear. The following lines are intended to shed a little more light on the process.

The procedure of how to publish EGH results seems to be designed to ensure that the legitimate interest of all contractors and the commission are taken into account. The process starts with you preparing a scientific publication. At the earliest stage possible, but not later than thirty days prior to any planned publication, please contact Prof. G. Hasenfuss by E-mail including

1. a notice to the coordinator G. Hasenfuss
2. a cc. to the project office under eugeneheart@med.uni-goettingen.de
3. relevant publication data such as authors, abstract and kind of publication

According to the consortium agreement this information will be forwarded to the other partners in the consortium and the commission. The Steering Committee will give clearance if no objection by EGH arises during a period of thirty days. No publication shall be made before such clearance has been given.

Any publication has to include the following line *"This work has been supported by EU FP6 grant LSHM-CT-2005-018833, EUGeneHeart."* Furthermore the author should ask the journal to include the following disclosure: *"The publication reflects only the author's views and the Community is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein."*

For legally binding details, please refer to section 12 p. 37-39 of the EGH consortium agreement. Please note, that publications to qualify for a degree are to be handled differently! The details are outlined at the aforementioned site.

Project management software

We are happy to learn that most of the EGH participants have started to efficiently use the "Milliarium" platform. The Milliarium software has been designed for you as EGH member to keep you on track – assisting and supporting you by reminding of upcoming deadlines, potential challenges and cooperations as well as any other kind of action expected from you. This is not meant to supervise you, but to provide you with total control of your project contribution. E.g. if the status of an actual workpackage (WP) is set to 0%, does this mean that someone never initiated to work on it or that the Milliarium platform just was forgotten to be updated?

Regular updating of Milliarium makes it an invaluable and most helpful instrument helping everybody of us to justify the confidence which the EU spent on us, for instance the money which has already been provided. The active contribution of every EGH member will help the consortium to fulfil their major obligations, while thereby securing further support by the EU.

The Milliarium platform is easily accessible via the internet (www.milliarium.gabo.de). A brief introduction to the main functions of the software was presented during the start-up meeting January 13-15 in Göttingen. In case of queries or for further information, please contact the project office under administrative.manager@med.uni-goettingen.de

In this context I would like to bring the following dates to your attention please note the coming deadlines prior the end of the year.

- End of first reporting period
- First cost statement, audit and reports due

Outlook on upcoming events:

General Assembly

22. - 24. November 2006

The program may be downloaded from our webpage www.eugeneheart.com