

**PRESS RELEASE**

***Second scientific meeting and summerschool of EC funded project on nanotechnology in medicine to improve early diagnosis and treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis***

Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, October 27, 2010. – The use of nanotechnology in medicine holds the potential to essentially improve diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of disease activity. To foster research in this area, the European Commission is funding the collaborative project “Development of Novel Nanotechnology Based Diagnosed Systems for Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteoarthritis (NanoDiaRA)” within the 7th Framework Programme for Research. The consortium, consisting of 15 European partners, was established in February 2010 and will work together on this topic for four years. The main objective of this integrated large-scale multidisciplinary project is to develop diagnostic tools for the early detection and response to treatment of arthritis based on nanoparticle technologies. In addition, the project will focus on the social, ethical and legal aspects of the application of nanotechnology in medicine.

The second NanoDiaRA scientific meeting took place at the Europäische Akademie GmbH in Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler from 11 to 13 October 2010, where the project partners presented their work of the first six months and discussed administrative questions, finances, and project reporting. Besides the principal investigators of the partner institutions and young investigators, Dr. George Kirmizidis, project officer of the European Commission, attended the meeting. This gave the partners the opportunity to discuss administrative and financial issues, and clarify questions regarding project reporting.

Furthermore, actions and milestones were constituted for the following six months. The different project groups and boards had the opportunity to meet: The ethical and legal advisory board, the protection and valorisation facilitator group, and the members of the workpackage on technical, medical and ethical aspects of “nanoparticles in health”. On the last day of the meeting an exploitation

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strategy seminar was given by Dr. George Vekinis, acting under the auspices of the European Commission Research Direction. More than in former framework projects funded by the European Commission (EC) the “plan for the use and dissemination of foreground” is now of great importance in FP7 projects. Therefore it is a priority for both the EC and the consortium to exploit the research results by licensing them to commercial partners, either within the network or outside, in order to promote patient care, as well as research and industrial innovation in Europe.

Besides the transfer of new knowledge into practical applications, young network investigators and trainees are encouraged and educated in the conduct and application of such novel and highly complex research and development such as that of NanoDiaRA. From 6 to 10 September 2010 the first NanoDiaRA summerschool took place at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), Switzerland. This nanotechnology summerschool was designed to promote learning in the broad field of nanoparticles and diagnostic tools. The NanoDiaRA summerschools are open for all graduate students and post doctoral students. About 50 participants from EPFL, the NanoDiaRA consortium and from external universities and institutions attended a series of basic and more technological-driven lectures about “Nanoparticles for biomedical applications”.

Experts mainly from the NanoDiaRA consortium presented the courses and discussed their work with young investigators. A special invited talk was given by Robin Poole, Professor Emeritus of Surgery at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and former Scientific Director of the Canadian Arthritis Network. He spoke about the use of skeletal biomarkers to detect and monitor arthritis disease activity and its treatment.

Altogether, the summerschool provided an impressive overview of the wide range of topics with which nanotechnology specialists are currently involved. The second NanoDiaRA summerschool will take place in about one year’s time at the University of Lund, Sweden, covering all the features of cell and molecular biology related to arthritic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. Again, the involvement of external researchers and trainees will be welcome.

*The project “Development of novel nanotechnology based diagnosed systems for rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis (NanoDiaRA)” is funded by the European Union. Its consortium consists of 15 European partners from both university and non-university institutions. The coordinator of the NanoDiaRA project is the Europäische Akademie Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler GmbH (Germany). MatSearch Consulting Hofmann (Switzerland) acts as the scientific coordinator. For more information see [www.nanodiara.eu](http://www.nanodiara.eu)*

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*The Europäische Akademie zur Erforschung von Folgen wissenschaftlich-technischer Entwicklungen Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler gGmbH was founded in 1996 by the Bundesland Rheinland-Palatinate (Land Rheinland-Pfalz) and the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt e.V. – DLR). Director of the academy and manager of the company is Professor Dr. phil. Dr. phil.h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann, who is a full professor of applied philosophy at the Universität Duisburg-Essen. The Europäische Akademie deals with the scientific study of the consequences of scientific and technological advances for individuals and society, as well as for the natural environment. The main focus is on the examination of foreseeable mid and long-term processes that are especially influenced by the natural and engineering sciences and the medical disciplines. As an independent scientific institution, the Europäische Akademie pursues a dialogue with the world of politics and society at large. Further information: [www.ea-aw.de/en](http://www.ea-aw.de/en).*

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