



The European Infrastructure for Translational Medicine EATRIS - ERIC is opening doors for the Bulgarian scientific community

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Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" hosted the first partnering conference entitled "The European Research Infrastructure for Translation Medicine EATRIS-ERIC in Bulgaria ". The event was co-organized by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bulgarian representation of EATRIS-ERIC at Sofia University and dedicated to the affiliation of Bulgaria to the European infrastructure in 2018.

EATRIS – ERIC (<https://eatris.eu/>) is a pan-European consortium which plays a fundamental role in the advancement of knowledge and technology in translational research and drug development. The infrastructure which comprises over 90 leading institutes in Europe, constitutes of a wide diversity of stakeholders who seek innovative solutions to the wide array of problems that are facing the development of new therapies. The EATRIS infrastructure represents the bricks and brains of the scientific community in Europe that is focused on translational research.

At the joint conference in the Mirror Hall of Sofia University EATRIS-ERIC was represented by Anton Usi (Operations & Finance Director for EATRIS), Martin de Cort and David Morrow (Programme Managers of Translational Medicine & Drug Development at EATRIS) as part of their official visit to the country. Before start of the Conference the EATRIS representatives were welcomed by the Rector of Sofia University Prof. Anastas Gerdjikov.

Official guests of the event were Mrs. Karina Angelieva – Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Mrs. Milena Damyanova - Director of the Science Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Science, Mrs. Yanita Zherkova - State Expert at the Science Directorate and Official Representative of Bulgaria in EATRIS, senior representatives of the academic and large scientific Community of Medical University of Plovdiv, Sofia University, Medical University of Sofia, National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, Institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as well as managers and professionals of private organizations with biomedical R&D portfolio, professional and social media.



The conference was opened by Corr. mem. Prof. Roumen Pankov, who welcomed all on behalf of Sofia University and the Bulgarian Representation of EATRIS-ERIC. Prof. Pankov pointed out that the event is under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "and is part of the program dedicated to the creation of a partner structure of



The Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Mrs. Karina Angelieva, also welcomed the participants and talked about some of the challenges to Bulgarian science that need to be overcome. She drew attention to the conversation about the positive image of scientific research in Bulgaria. According to her, in the next programming period, Bulgaria should define thematic areas and implementation tools to support innovation.

On behalf of the Bulgarian Representation in EATRIS, welcome note was extended by Prof. Rossitsa Konakchieva from the Faculty of Biology, Sofia University, who is the National director of EATRIS-ERIC in Bulgaria. She stressed on the complex processes leading to the Bulgaria's full accession to EATRIS. In her words, Bulgarian science needs better integration at European level and with the support of EATRIS and the access to the infrastructure supported by Bulgarian government this is now feasible. She expressed the belief that the granted access to high-end technological and scientific expertise available at EATRIS will impact enormously on the performance of academy research and help increase the effectiveness of academy - industry partnership in Bulgaria to meet social needs in the field of translational biomedical science. She invited the Bulgarian researchers to use the capacities and expertise available in the pan-European consortium.



The event continued with presentations of EATRIS overview and scientific platforms and projects delivered by Anton Ussi, Martin de Kort and David Morrow. The leading European research programs of the consortium, projects with major pharmaceutical companies and European organizations in the field of biomedicine, interaction with other European infrastructures such as BBMRI and ECRIN were presented.



The Conference program also included introduction of four main Bulgarian biomedical research infrastructure complexes responding to the high standards of modern molecular biology and medicine - OP NOIR funded Center of Competence “ Fundamental, translational and clinical studies in the field of infections and infectious immunology”, NCIPD, Sofia; presented by prof. Maria Nikolova, Head of Immunology Department and National Reference Immunology Laboratory, the Center of Competence "Personalized Innovative Medicine (PERIMED)" Medical University Plovdiv, presented by prof. Milena Mourdjeva, Vice- Rector, the National University Complex for Biomedical and Applied Research (NKBPI) - BBMRI affiliated partner at Medical University Sofia, by Dr. Atanaska Mitkova, the Research Infrastructure Cell Technologies in Biomedicine (INFRAACT) of the National Roadmap of RI 2017-2023, presented by Prof. Soren Hayrabedianm Director of IBIR-BAS.



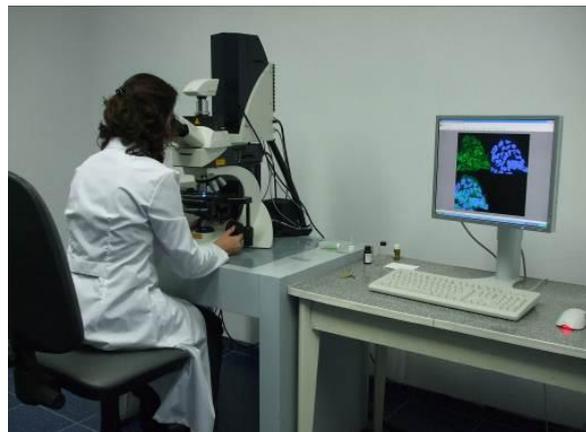
The opportunities for scientific and technological cooperation in the field of personalized translation medicine, arising from the accession of Bulgaria to the European infrastructure, were discussed.



During their short but content visit in Sofia, Anton Ussi, Martin de Kort and David Morrow had several intense meetings first of which in the Ministry of Education and Science. The guests were introduced to the administration office of Deputy Minister Mrs. Karina Angelieva, Mrs. Milena Damyanova, and Mrs. Yanita Zherkova – Official Bulgarian Representative in the Board of Governors to EATRIS. The meeting was attended by Head representatives of the Research Infrastructure Cell Technologies in Biomedicine – Corr. mem Prof. Roumen Pankov, the Coordinator and Nacional Director to EATRIS - Prof. Rossitza Konakchieva and the Director of the Institute of Biology and Immunology of Reproduction at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Prof. Soren Hayrabedian. The concept and implementation stage of the RI Cell Technologies in Biomedicine as potential Bulgarian node committed to translational medicine was presented. Free interaction contributed to a meaningful discussion focused on national and European politics in innovation and science and the new opportunities for a better integration of Bulgarian translational research in ERA.



The guests were given opportunity to visit also a SME industrial partner active in reproductive medicine and assisted reproduction and its TTO in the ReProBioMed Medical Center and also the Institute of Biology and Immunology of Reproduction at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – both institutions Parties of the Consortium Cell Technologies in Biomedicine (INFRAACT).



The visit was held in a spirit of mutual understanding, constructive and content dialog. There was a general consensus about the need for active further action to organize a Bulgarian node partnering to EATRIS which will enable the Bulgarian scientific community to benefit from the hub -and -spoke model of access to high-end technology, expertise and logistic support provided by EATRIS-ERIC to member states.

More about the event:

https://www.uni-sofia.bg/index.php/eng/news/news_and_events

<http://mon.bg/bg/news/3491>