

EUROPEAN BIOALPINE CONVENTION: 1st edition in Grenoble, October 6, 2006

Theme: Innovation in Neuroscience

Grenoble, the 19th of June, 2006 – With its theme of *Neuroscience Innovation: An academic industrial partnership*, the first ever European BioAlpine Convention will be held in Grenoble France on the 6th of October, 2006, organised by the tri-national transalpine bio-cluster which consists of the Adebag in the Grenoble/Rhône-Alpes region (France), the Bioindustry Park in the Turin/Piedmont region (Italy) and BioAlps in the Geneva-Lausanne/Western Switzerland region.

This topic is currently at the forefront of European debate on public health matters. Indeed, 7th Research and Technical Development Framework Programme launched by the European Commission, and which will run from 2007 to 2013, has a specific health research focus looking at the brain and its pathologies, human development and ageing.

The European BioAlpine Convention will bring together researchers, PhD and Post-doc. students, start-ups, SMES and industrial groups specialising in Neurosciences, with the aim of encouraging partnerships between research and industry in Europe.

Contact and exchange between participants will be facilitated by the **Brokerage Event**, organised by the IRC SOFRAA (The Innovation Relay Centre for Western Switzerland / France Rhône-Alpes Auvergne) and the IRC Alps (The Innovation Relay Centre for the Alps and North West Italy). Participants will be able to arrange a series of individual meetings, allowing them to meet strategic contacts that could help them with the progression of their projects. In addition, the **Poster Session** will help new and innovative project leaders in this sector to be discovered. This event will give young high potential researchers and entrepreneurs (companies less than three years old) the chance to demonstrate their work and make themselves known to industry leaders and financiers. Four prizes of a total worth of 6 000€ will be awarded following the presentations.

Four working sessions, which will include scientific conferences and company presentations, will focus on the following topics, will run during the day, covering the following topics:

- § **Neuro Imaging** : MNR, PET, Neuro-pharmacology, molecular imaging
Chairman : Mr Johan Luthman, Head of Neuroscience, Serono International
- § **The role of -omics in neuroscience** : proteomics, genomics, metabolomics, biocomputing, pharmacogenomics and biochips
Chairman : Mr Mauro Fasano, Associated Professor in Biochemistry and Vice-President of the Structural and Functional Biology Department of the Science University of Insubria / Bioindustry Park del Canavese (Italy)
- § **Ageing and Dementia** : neuro degeneration, cognition, movement disorder and dementia
Chairman : Ms. Andrea Pfeiffer – Managing Director, AC Immune
- § **New breakthrough therapies** : stem cells, gene therapy, brain stimulation and neurosurgery
President : Mr Claude Feuerstein, President of the Adebag, instigator of the Grenoble Institute of Neuroscience and coordinator of the regional cluster looking at Handicaps, Ageing and Neurosciences in the Rhône-Alpes region

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The plenary opening session starting the convention will be presided over by Mr Graeme Bilbe, Director of research into nervous systems at Novartis Pharma AG.

In addition to being a hot topic in Europe today, the theme of this year's convention was chosen because of the wealth of expertise and synergies available in this sector in each of the regions involved:

- Grenoble/Rhône-Alpes (France): Study of the nervous system has brought together a group of top multidisciplinary research teams, with more than 800 researchers and students working at Grenoble's Institute of Neuroscience and the Federal Institute of Neuroscience in Lyon, which is linked to the Institute of Cognitive Sciences. The region also has a wealth of existing and emerging companies such as bioMérieux, the Centre of Ergotherapy and Ergonomics (CREE), Thebaud BioMedical Instrument, ISIS Robotics, Synapcell, Neuromic, Imedex, Addex, Theralys ...
- Turin/Piedmont (Italy): the University of Turin, the University of Western Piedmont and the Bioindustry Park are at the origin of many neuroscience research papers. The region also profits from centres of excellence such as the Fondation Cavalieri Ottolenghi, the Centre for Cognitive Sciences and the Rita Levi Montalcini Centre for Neurosurgery. And let us not forget the industrial powerhouses present such as Serono, Bracco, UCB Pharma ... as well as the new companies being regularly launched.
- Geneva/Lausanne/Western Switzerland: Life Sciences are covered by 12 research institutions in Western Switzerland (EPFL, HUG, CHUV, UNIL, UNIGE, UNINE, UNIFR, HEVs, ISREC, CSEM, the Ludwig Institute and the Swiss Institute of Bio-computing) and most of them are working in Neuroscience. Five of them have created the Centre for BioMedical Imagery (CIBM), a centre of excellence which aims at improving biomedical imaging techniques, using the support of a wide network of local researchers. The region is also home to important industrial leaders such as Serono, Debio, Neurochem and start-ups with healthy ambitions like Addex, AC Immune and Xigen.
- At the same time, scientific cooperation between research teams in France's Rhone Alps region and Geneva has helped create a centre for international research into ageing in Archamps, France, close to the Swiss border.

The European BioAlpine Convention is the first event of European stature to emanate from the recent creation of the tri-national transalpine biocluster. The Adebag, the Bioindustry Park and BioAlps signed a cooperative agreement at the start of 2006 with the aim of coordinating their activities and developing a zone of transalpine excellence in the sector of biotechnologies and medical technologies. This annual event, which will be organised in turn in France, Italy and Switzerland, is the first example of the three institutions' desire to facilitate access to local scientific and technological expertise and resources, uniting industry leaders and scientists in the sector.

The European Bioalpine Convention will be held on the 6th of October 2006 from 9am to 6.30pm at the Alpexpo in Grenoble. www.bioalpineconvention.com

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The Organisers of the European BioAlpine Convention:

Adebag (Grenoble-Rhône-Alpes): the Association for the Development of Biotechnologies in the Grenoble Conurbation (ADEBAG) brings together and federates Universities and research centres, local public institutions and economic players to ensure the development and promotion of biotechnologies, bio-industry and healthcare-related technologies in Grenoble area.

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Bioindustry Park (Turin-Piedmont): The Bioindustry Park is a science park aimed at promoting and developing Research and Development activities and hosting companies working in life-sciences. The park benefits from a Laboratory of Advanced Methodologies (LIMA), which offers a range of services and research activities in molecular biology, biotechnology, chemistry, imaging, bioinformatics and proteomics. The park also contains a bio-incubator (Discovery).

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BioAlps (Western Switzerland): A non-profit organisation that brings together members from the economic and academic spheres in French-speaking Switzerland. BioAlps' mission is to promote French and Italian-speaking Switzerland as a centre for excellence in life sciences, research and teaching institutions as well as local companies.

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