



## EU-LAC Health

*Defining a Roadmap for Cooperative Health Research between the EU and Latin America-Caribbean Countries: a Policy Oriented Research*

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Dear readers,

We are pleased to present the first issue of EU-LAC Health newsletter.

EU-LAC Health can be considered an ambitious project if we look at our aim:

**We want to contribute to improve the health of citizens in Europe (EU) and in Latin-America and the Caribbean (LAC) by fostering health research collaboration between both regions.**

Three basic functions of research programmes were identified to guide EU-LAC Health discussions in the future:

- Health research policy governance
- Science management and governance
- Stakeholders' involvement

It was clear after the first Workshop in Rio that EU-LAC Health needed to discuss the scientific content of future collaboration in parallel to the policy options, because none of them can be understood by itself.

Therefore we decided to ask country representatives to identify scientific areas for EU-LAC collaboration, obtaining response from 15 LAC and 7 EU countries, plus 3 multinational organizations. At the same time, we imagined three possible scenarios for governing EU-LAC collaboration, namely:

- Business
- Several multinational programmes
- An integrated programme under a single body

Equipped with the results of the consultation and the scenarios, we met in Buenos Aires for our second workshop, the first on scenario building, hosted with elegance by the Argentinian Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation.

Attendants were immediately immerse in the most exciting discussions. While scientific areas deserve more detailed work to be really meaningful, scenarios proved to be a source of ideas to be definitely taken into account. Funding, scientific excellence, and societal values associated with collaboration are some of them.

By now we are beginning to see what a wide landscape we have opened with EU-LAC Health. We will continue to work in Rome to furnish this space to make it comfortable and still open and wide.

Carlos Segovia,  
ISCIII, EU-LAC Health Coordinator

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## EU-LAC Health in a nutshell: Project and Partners

This is the first issue of the EU-LAC Health Newsletter. This edition contains information on main outcomes from the project activities, interesting links and upcoming workshops concerning health research, development and innovation about international cooperation activities between Europe and Latin America.

EU-LAC Health is a five-years coordination action co-financed by the European Commission through the 7th Framework Program (Health Theme). **It proposes to define a detailed plan to guide policy makers and other stakeholders on future actions to support cooperative health research between Latin America and Caribbean countries (LAC) and EU Member States.** This consensus Roadmap will be developed using a policy oriented approach and taking into account the new political framework for EU-LAC

collaboration in S&T. The Roadmap will provide policy-makers and R&D funding bodies with new insights on how to best coordinate and fund cooperative health research between the two regions.

An important effort will be devoted during the project to link and coordinate two important policy areas with strong involvement in health research funding: Science and Technology Policy (research) and International Development Cooperation.

The EU-LAC bi-regional collaboration in the field of health research stands as a very broad and complex issue that involves many stakeholders from different political and socio-economic contexts, including the EU as a whole, each Member State and the variety of LAC countries, and touches different political agendas

such as research, but sometimes also development cooperation and external relations.

The Carlos III Institute of Health (ISCIII, Spain), Sociedad para el Fomento de la Innovación Tecnológica SL (INNOVATEC, Spain), Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED, Switzerland/Mexico), the Ministry of Science and Technology of Argentina (MINCYT), the Ministry of Health of Costa Rica (MSCR), the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz, Brazil), the Agency for the Promotion of Research (APRE, Italy), and the German Center for Aerospace, Energy and Transportation Research (DLR, Germany) together form a well-balanced multidisciplinary team with participants from health research policy-making institutions, R&D funding agencies, research centers and a specialized R&D consulting company.

### The major goals of EU-LAC Health are:



**Discuss and explore**, with policy-makers and other stakeholders, **how to best coordinate health research** policies and funding between EU and LAC.



**Define** **Establish a consensus Roadmap for cooperative health** research with the final objective of setting up a future framework for collaboration between the EU and LAC regions in this field.



**Promote the creation of a coordinating body** to implement and develop the Roadmap.



**Disseminate the project results** to the main project stakeholders as a means to increase and improve EU-LAC cooperation in health research.

## Main outcomes from the project activities

### EU-LAC Health *State of Play Workshop* held in Rio de Janeiro, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2012— Main outcomes



Dr. Carlos Segovia opens the workshop

On March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 2012, the first EU-LAC Health expert-workshop, organized by Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ), took place in Rio de Janeiro.

Altogether, the eight project partners, along with invited high-level Advisory Board-Members as well as several external experts from the European Union (EU) and from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries, discussed the current state of the EU-LAC Health research collaboration and planned future activities.

In the workshop the project partners presented an analysis of the present situation of the R&D on health in the LAC and the EU, the identification of research for health funding programs and the existing legal framework of Science & Technology collaboration between LAC and EU. It was generally acknowledged that both regions have a strong scientific potential but the

differences between and within the two regions have to be kept in mind when collaboration is envisaged.

The vivid discussions were enriched by short presentations of some of the invited external experts sharing their experiences in relation to research collaboration, capacity building and mobility. High-level representatives from Argentina, Chile, the Dominican Republic or Trinidad and Tobago, amongst others, contributed with their experiences. Several short presentations concerning different networks, like the Network for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in Central America (NeTropica) or RIMAIS, the Ibero-American Network of Learning and Research in Health, depicted good practices and experiences. Such mechanisms could be taken as an example for good international collaboration and might help to distribute the idea and outcome of the EU-LAC Health project, as was stated in the lively discussion after the presentations. Both, project

partners and all invited experts showed enthusiasm and elation regarding the future project development.

COHRED, APRE, ISCIII and FIOCRUZ prepared technical documents on the state of play of health research in LAC and EU countries, funding programs between the two regions, and on the current framework of science and technology cooperation between the EU and LAC countries. These reports were the mainstay of the discussions during the event. With the results of the debates, COHRED was responsible for integrating documents and aggregate inputs received from the participants. The new report (restricted circulation) will provide the basis for the publication of two papers in January 2013.

Project-Homepage with a description, information material, flyers and a complete list of the project partners under: [www.eulachealth.eu](http://www.eulachealth.eu)



Project's members and participants in the last day of the workshop held in Rio de Janeiro





## EU-LAC Health presented at the EC Health Open Info Day Brussels, 29<sup>th</sup> May 2012

EU-LAC Health Project was presented by its coordinator, Carlos Segovia, Deputy Director of International Research Programmes and Institutional Relations of the Institute of Health Carlos III (Spain), at the Open Information Day for the 7<sup>th</sup> call of FP7 Health Theme organized by the European Commission at the Charlemagne Building in Brussels.

The Morning Plenary Session was opened by Ruxandra Draghia-Akli, Director for Health Research, from Research & Innovation DG. After the presentation of the Health 2013 call by the Heads of Unit of Health Directorate, three parallel sessions dedicated to SMEs, Clinical Trials and International Cooperation were held.

Indridi Benediktsson, principal policy officer for international cooperation

in the Health Directorate, from Research and Innovation DG, moderated the International Cooperation session.

Carlos Segovia presented the main objectives, methodology and project partners of EU-LAC Health and described the steps taken during the first months of the running project. The coordinator stressed the need of involvement of the different health research policy areas: policy governance and funding, scientific governance and stakeholders during the course of the project. Moreover, he announced the Scenario Building Workshop held on 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> October at Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The EC officer pointed out this project as a model for cooperation between EU and other regions and highlighted the need of collaboration with countries not implicated in the EU-LAC Health consortium.

Further International Cooperation initiatives presented at

the International Cooperation session were: The International Cooperation in diabetes and obesity by Thorkild Sorensen, The Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases by Celina Gorre, and Access2Canada as an example of the Access projects by Nadia Khelef.

More info on this event: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/events-14\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/events-14_en.html) Project-Homepage with a description, information material, flyers and a complete list of the Project partners under: [www.eulachealth.eu](http://www.eulachealth.eu)



Dr. Indridi Benediktsson (left) and Dr. Carlos Segovia at the Info Day

## Scenario Building Workshop held in Buenos Aires, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2012—Main outcomes



The first “Scenario Building Workshop”, realized by the EU-LAC Health project consortium, was held on 22-23 October in Buenos Aires. Project partners, as well as Advisory Board members came together with European and Latin American experts from the health sector in order to analyze different scenarios of possible common funding mechanisms for joint health research collaboration.

The Workshop was opened by Ms. Águeda Menvielle, Director of the International Relations Department of Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (Mincyt), Mr. Alfonso Díez Torres, Ambassador of the EU in Argentina and Ms. Carolina O’Donell, Technical Coordinator of Ministry of Health (MSAL) emphasizing the importance of international cooperation between LAC and EU for scientific development. The first part of the workshop consisted of a review

of potential health research areas for collaboration suggested by EU and LAC country representatives in response to a preparatory survey carried out by the consortium. These areas need to be identified to determine overlapping and common health research interests. The international cooperation in health research then brings an added value and mutual benefit to both regions.

In order to sort possibilities for a common funding of bi-regional research cooperation initiatives, three different scenarios developed in deskwork prior to the meeting were presented during the second part of the workshop. These were examined through an in-depth SWOT– analysis by the partners, experts and project advisors. Many strengths and opportunities such as already existing well working funding mechanisms and bilateral agreements were exempli-

fied. However, it was pointed out that weaknesses and threats such as the difficulty of harmonizing several countries’ interests or the difficulty of collecting resources from participating countries have to be kept in mind. This SWOT– analysis has been seen as a success by the participants allowing the partners to better anticipate the risks and opportunities when it actually comes to realistically plan, organize and establish common funding schemes of health research.

The second “Scenario Building Workshop” will be held in Italy, (Rome) in April 2013. It is planned as a continuation of the Buenos Aires Scenario-Workshop. The results will here be narrowed and worked with aiming at a consensus in common funding acceptable for all countries in the regions and developing a first draft of the common roadmap.



Project’s members and participants in the last day of the workshop held in Buenos Aires

## EU-LAC Health Advisory Board in the spotlight



### A Caribbean Perspective

#### By Karl Theodore \*

In this initial statement on the Caribbean there are four points which will be made.

There is no question that the Caribbean will be excited to be included in any programme to develop joint investigations between researchers from Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. The fact is that while the epidemiological profiles of the two regions are more or less identical, the capacity of the different regions to

respond to the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which dominate the epidemiological landscape is widely dissimilar.

The implicit suggestion that **the countries of LAC have to find a different way of coping with their health challenges** opens up a wide area of joint research both on the clinical front as well as in respect of how the health systems of the region are configured.

Referring specifically to the English-speaking Caribbean, while it is not surprising that most of the health research being carried out is undertaken by the University of the West Indies (UWI), the presence of a number of offshore medical schools speaks to research capacity yet to be explored. This is particularly interesting because of the role being played by these medical schools in the health systems of the different countries of the region both in the training of regional students as well as in the delivery of health services.

One of the main advantages of the joint research envisaged under the proposed EU-LAC programme would be the opportunity to improve the

situation in respect of morbidity data in the LAC region. For while, in respect of morbidity data, the region compares well with the rest of the world, the same cannot be said for morbidity data. This has been a limitation on the kind of research that has been possible in this region. The hope is that working with EU researchers will provide both the incentive and the support required to address this lacuna.

From the point of view of the HEU, Centre of Health Economics, which is the only health economics research entity in the Caribbean, the hope is that the proposed research under the EU-LAC programme will place appropriate emphasis on health policy and health system research. The threat of exploding health costs in a context where the economies of the region are all under severe economic stress has put health policy and health system research on the front burner. Of course, the link with what is an epidemic of NCDs in this region emphasizes the importance of this type of research.

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### \*About the author

Karl Theodore is the Director of the HEU, Centre for Health Economics at the University of the West Indies. He is Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics on the St. Augustine Campus where he has taught Health Economics and supervised research in this area for many years. He

has led a multidisciplinary team of professionals in producing a number of technical reports for governments and international agencies. The work of the HEU team has been one of the main contributions to a better understanding of the economic impact of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, and a better estimation of the cost of responding to the epidemic.

Over the years, Professor Theodore has also been an advisor and/or consultant to a number of governments and/or state agencies across the region. Professor Theodore is now responsible for training a number of young economists to intensify the fight against HIV/AIDS in every country of the region.



## News

### Scientific and Technological Pole in Buenos Aires

The Scientific and Technological Pole is a very recent center devoted to the management, production and dissemination of knowledge. This facility is considered – both nationally and internationally- as an important Center for national academic and scientific development.

In the Scientific and Technological Pole, the headquarters of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive

these centers, the following ones are worth mentioning:

- **Institute for Research in Biomedicine in Buenos Aires**—CONICET - Institute partner of the Max Planck Society in Buenos Aires: dedicated to current topics in Life Sciences, especially in the field of research in Biomedicine.

- Research and Training Unit of the

- **Interdisciplinary Centre for Studies in Science, Technology and Innovation** (CIECTI): this Center is oriented to the Social Sciences and operates in conjunction with local universities and multilateral agencies.

In a second stage, it is expected to include Modeling and Visualization Centers, and other Institutes linked to the Nanotechnology Center, and to include other areas of expertise such



Innovation and its Agency: the National Agency for the Promotion of Science and Technology have been located, and, in a second stage, the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET) shall also be relocated. These three organizations are the engines that drive the national development in the field of science, technology and innovation.

In addition, the International Interdisciplinary Institutes for Innovation (I4), promoting international relations between Argentina and the rest of the countries, in terms of research and development in science, technology and productive innovation, shall also be located in these premises. Among

ICGEB (**International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology**): This will be a multidisciplinary unit focused on the areas of Bioethics, Biosafety, and Intellectual Property Rights.

- **Bilateral Centre for Industrial Design** (Argentina - Italy): this Centre shall be devoted to research on the relationship between industrial design and new technologies, involving several Italian institutions: the *Politecnico di Milano* University (Polytechnic Institute of Milano University), the *Alma Mater Studiorum* University of Bologna, the IUAV of Venice and the Second University of Naples.

as Biophysicochemical, Exact and Technical Sciences, among other disciplines.

Located in the neighborhood of Palermo (in the premises of the former Giol wineries), the Scientific and Technological Pole will have an auditorium and a Museum of Science. And, as a token of the ties forged between science and society, the Scientific and Technological Pole will keep its doors open to the community through a Restaurant, located in the Red Building, and a green square open for public access.

## Relevant Events

### 3<sup>rd</sup> RIMAIS MEETING, Cartagena, Colombia, December 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2012

The Third Meeting of the Iberoamerican Ministerial Network for Health Research (RIMAIS) will be held with the participation of countries representatives and Advisory Board members in the Spanish Development Cooperation Agency (AECID) at the Training Center, Cartagena Colombia.

The network will be celebrating in this opportunity the official registration as an Iberoamerican network

(RRI/004RRI/004), following acceptance communicated by the Iberoamerican General Secretary (Iberoamerican Summit), last November 5, 2012.

The purpose of this event is to follow up the action plan, to analyze and approve the dissemination plan, as well as to develop preselected issues in order to improve health research steward-

ship capacity for the network members. Further information: [www.rimais.net](http://www.rimais.net)



### Senior Officials Meeting on the implementation of the EU-LAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation, Brussels, Belgium, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2013

The European Union-Economic Community of Latin American and Caribbean countries (EUCELAC) Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) will take place on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 in Brussels, Belgium.

It is part of the implementation of

the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (the 'Joint Initiative').

The Joint Initiative was endorsed by the 2010 Madrid Summit Action Plan. Its mandate is, among others, to "establish regular bi-regional dialogue on science, research, tech-

nology and innovation to consolidate EU-LAC cooperation and to update common priorities, encourage mutual policy learning and ensure the proper implementation and effectiveness of cooperation instruments".

### The 8<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Health Promotion, Finland, June, 2013

The 8<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Health Promotion (8GCHP) will be held at the Finland Hall in Helsinki, Finland, on June 10-14 2013. The conference is co-organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland.

Participation at the Conference is by invitation only. The Conference will assess achievements and aims for health promotion globally from Ottawa to Nairobi. It aims to address what works and how, identifying options for action, available processes, mechanisms and tools. identifying options for action, available processes, mechanisms and tools.

The major goals of the Conference are:

- To implement the intersectoral action for health and health in all policies approaches at the country level
- To exchange experiences in implementing Health in All Policies
- To highlight the value of health promotion activities for health, their relevance for overall societal development and for development policies
- To inform about economic aspects of health promotion

- To highlight the important role of primary health care in health promotion

- To review progress, impact and achievements of health promotion since the Ottawa Conference promotion activities for health, their relevance for overall societal development and for development policies. Further information: [www.stm.fi/en/ministry/international\\_cooperation/who/healthpromotion2013](http://www.stm.fi/en/ministry/international_cooperation/who/healthpromotion2013)





## Related Projects

**ENLACE** (Enhancing Scientific Cooperation between the European Union and Central America) is a project funded by the European Commission, under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development - International Cooperation. The project ENLACE aims at supporting the bi-regional dialogue

between the EU and the Central America Countries and includes a set of activities to enhance the networking among EU and Central America researchers through the organization of S&T dialogues, to identify research priorities of mutual interest and to raise awareness on FP7 in Central America mainly by

setting up the network of FP7 National Contact Point in Central America. Project website: <http://www.enlace-project.eu>



**EUCARINET** is a four-year INCONET Coordination Action, supported by the European Commission (DG RTD-INCO), whose main goal is to strengthen bi-regional sustainable dialogue on Science and Technology between Europe and the Caribbean.

The project consortium includes 11

partners, 5 from the EU and 6 from the Caribbean, representing stakeholders from research, industry, government and civil society, that will ensure the fulfillment of EUCARINET's objectives.

EUCARINET targets the whole of the Caribbean region: the ACP group of

states, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, the overseas Departments and Collectivities, the Overseas Countries and Territories. Project website: <http://www.eucarinet.eu/>



**EULANEST** (European - Latin American Network for Science and Technology project) was realized under the European Unions' 6th Framework Programme for Research and Development. The project aimed at promoting and coordinating co-operation in Science and Technology (S&T) between EU Member States (MS) and Latin American Countries (LA). The ERA-NET action fostered networking and co-

operation of European policy-makers and programme managers involved in research cooperation with Latin America in relevant fields of science.

EULANEST supported its partners in the development and implementation of joint transnational research activities. Within the project cooperation activities in S&T between European EULANEST partners and LA

countries were the mapping and benchmarking, identifying best practices and preparing base for a Joint Action Programme. Project website: [http://www.eularinet.eu/site/eulanest\\_follow\\_up/](http://www.eularinet.eu/site/eulanest_follow_up/)



**EULARINET** (European Union - Latin American Research and Innovation NETworks) is a 4 years Coordination Action (INCO.Net) (March 2008- February 2012) whose main goal is to strengthen the bi-regional dialogue on S&T between EU Member States (MS) (Austria, France, Finland, Germany, Portugal and Spain), Associated States (AS) (Norway) and Latin Ameri-

can Partner Countries (LAPC) (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua and Uruguay) at policy, programme and institutional (research entities) level, thus contributing to a threefold objective: a) Promote the joint identification, setting up, implementation and monitoring of mutual interest priorities of future work programmes across the Specific

Programmes of FP7; b) Joint definition of S&T co-operation policies and c) support and stimulate the participation of LAPC in FP7. Project website: <http://www.eularinet.eu/>



## EU-LAC Health — Future Activities

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Scenario Building Workshop “Coordination of Regional and International Funding Efforts”



This workshop will take place in Rome on the **11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2013** and will address, among others, the following issues:

- ◆ *Influence of different priority setting policies* of the funding programmes.
- ◆ *Effect of the level of coordination of regional and international funding efforts* and with others EU initiatives and EU Member States' actions in the region.
- ◆ *Influence of the utilization of different monitoring and evaluation systems* to identify the impact of the R&D projects and programmes by different agencies.
- ◆ *Impact of the possible creation of a body* coordinating national and international health research funding in the region.

More information will be available on the EU-LAC Health Project website: <http://www.eulachealth.eu/>

## EU-LAC Health Partners



### EU-LAC Health Coordination

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