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Press Release

By joining resources Europe and the pharmaceutical industry gain the lead

Today the first Call for Proposals under the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) was presented at an official event in Brussels bringing together high level stakeholders from all areas of drug discovery and development.

The IMI Joint Undertaking is a fundamentally new and the first of its kind public-private partnership between the European Commission and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). By removing major bottlenecks in the drug development process through innovative research projects, IMI will accelerate the discovery and development of innovative medicines. Furthermore it will boost Europe's competitiveness in biopharmaceutical innovation and foster Europe as the most attractive place for pharmaceutical R&D.

European Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik underlined the ambitious goals of the initiative: "IMI is about pooling public and private efforts so that Europe can be a big player. We want to be the best in the world and become a champion's league for biopharmaceutical research by moving from individual project-funding, to joint programme funding involving industry and public stakeholders. "

Arthur Higgins, President of EFPIA emphasised the need to join forces with partners to address the main cause of delays in drug innovation: "The challenges behind innovation are complex, and the decline in the number of new drugs is due to a combination of scientific, regulatory and economic factors. We as an industry are ready to play our part in bringing forward medical innovation but cannot solve all these issues by ourselves".

This project is all the more important as Europe was once known as the "world's pharmacy" and some ten years ago 7 out of 10 new medicines originated from Europe. Today this has fallen to about 3 out of 10.

The drug development costs for a new chemical or biological candidate was estimated at over € 1 billion in 2007 and on average it takes 12-13 years to bring a new medicine to the market. Out of every 10,000 substances synthesised in laboratories, only one or two will successfully pass all stages to become marketable medicines.

"IMI brings together experts from the laboratory and the clinic working on new approaches to better predict as early as possible whether a drug works in a patient and whether it is safe. Earlier access by patients in need to new effective treatments is the ultimate goal of this joint initiative" stated Jonathan Knowles, Chairman of the IMI Governing Board.

IMI has a total budget of € 2 billion until 2013. In 2008 grants of around € 123 million will be awarded to the most promising research projects in the areas of brain disorders,

metabolic and inflammatory diseases. In future calls IMI will also cover cancer and infectious diseases. These areas have been chosen because they are, primarily, important areas of unmet medical need, affecting the lives of millions of European citizens.

Web sites:

<http://imi.europa.eu>

<http://www.imi-europe.org>

[Live streaming of the Brussels event](#)

Factsheets:

[Fact sheet on the Innovative Medicines Initiative](#)

[Factsheet on Governance of the IMI Joint Undertaking](#)

Factsheet on Call for Proposals

Factsheet Joint Technology Initiatives

For further information on Innovative Medicines Initiative

Karen Strandgaard +32 2 62 62 564 karenstrandgaard@efpia.org

Dagmar Laube-Friese +32 2 29 57 189 imi.infodesk@ec.europa.eu

Media Contact:

Ilona von Bethlenfalvy +32 2 54 56 572 ilona.vonbethlenfalvy@ogilvy.com