

Press release, 21 February 2017

SMEs call for improved conditions in AMR drug development

More than 30 antibiotics experts at 10th Berlin Conference on 24th February 2017 | Focus on business perspective of novel antimicrobials/ BEAM alliance with list of recommendations how to improve SME R&D

Berlin, 21 February 2017. It is not only since a US woman died of an infection with antimicrobial-resistant superbugs that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is seen as one of the world's most pressing public health issues. Healthcare systems worldwide are in growing need of efficiently combating AMR. Solutions for finding novel antibiotics or effective alternative strategies are urgently wanted. According to Jim O'Neill's "Review on Antimicrobial Resistance" report, published in May 2016, at least 15 new antimicrobial medicines a decade should reach the market to address growing resistances. However, in recent years big pharma has generally withdrawn from the discovery and early-phase development of antibiotics. "To achieve 15 new compounds, around 300 early-stage projects are necessary. Small and medium-sized companies are the keystone to fuel this pipeline by providing new innovative compounds and technologies and conducting both early and clinical stage research," says Marie Petit, coordinator of the BEAM Alliance. The European consortium is a network of 50 biotech companies active in the field of antimicrobials. Together they have over 200 early stage R&D projects and 30 compounds in clinical development. Several of its members will bring a wealth of expertise to the upcoming "10th Berlin Conference – Novel Antimicrobials", which focuses on the challenging business of drug development in the field of antibiotics.

The event takes place on 24th February in the British Embassy in Berlin and is jointly organised by German information specialist BIOCOM AG and the UK's Department of International Trade. Up to 130 participants from the European biotech and pharma sector are expected to come. "By choosing antimicrobials as a topic for our 10th Berlin Conference, we want to show that there is, in general, no lack of ideas and technologies to fight AMR and to develop new antibiotics. However, there is a lack of appropriate mechanisms to foster innovation in the field, so that new drugs made in Europe have a realistic chance to reach the market," underlines Sandra Wirsching from BIOCOM AG, responsible for the programme development of the 10th Berlin Conference. In total, more than 30 high-level speakers will present during the event. A dozen SMEs from all over Europe will speak about their technologies and approaches, academic experts will show new research approaches for novel antimicrobials and representatives of European public-private initiatives, such as ENABLE and DRIVE-AB, will give an update on their activities. In addition, the background story of the newly established British AMR centre, which is targeted at accelerating the technology transfer from bench to bedside, will be explained and investors as well as start-ups are given the opportunity to present their views. In a keynote, Christopher Egerton-Warburton, Fund Manager and Founding Partner of Lion's Head Global Partner will speak about the major goals of the new Global AMR Innovation Fund.

Accompanying the Berlin Conference, BEAM will publish a list of recommendations on how SME R&D in the field could be supported in future. Among others, the alliance not only demands tailor-made regulatory guidance for adapted clinical trials, but also calls for a GAIN-act like specific designation that would adapt current reimbursement models to real societal benefits of new AMR compounds. “Compared to other areas of drug development, it is still very challenging to build a positive business case for innovative approaches in the field of antibacterial therapies. It’s our responsibility to change this situation to save the medical advances that were achieved with the introduction of antibiotics,” says Marc Gitzinger, Board member of BEAM and CEO of BioVersys AG. The Swiss-based company is developing an alternative strategy interfering with the bacteria’s resistance mechanisms. Current activities will be presented by Gitzinger during the Berlin Conference.

For more information, see the full programme of the 10th Berlin Conference “Novel Antimicrobials”:
www.berlin-conference.com

Please note: Press attendees will receive free entry to the conference. Due to security reasons in the Embassy we need a registration in advance. A conference binder with all speakers details and company profiles is available on request. Please contact Sandra Wirsching: s.wirsching@biocom.de

About BIOCOM AG

As a leading information specialist for biotechnology and life sciences in Europe, BIOCOM AG has extensive knowledge and experience in all biotech areas, from the pharmaceutical and agricultural sectors to industrial production. The specialists at BIOCOM AG have been tracking the development of the biotech industry from research to market for 30 years. BIOCOM AG has its headquarters in Berlin and offices in Austria, Switzerland and Belgium. It is active throughout Europe in media, events and services. The “Berlin Conference on Life Sciences” is a business conference with a ten-year history. Each year, it showcases a different topic of strategic value to critical areas in the life sciences sector – ranging from R&D challenges to market access issues. This year, the event will be hosted by the British Embassy in Berlin. It is jointly organised by BIOCOM and the UK’s Department of International Trade.

www.biocom.de

About the BEAM Alliance

The emergence of multi-drug resistant bacteria presents a global public health crisis which demands the development of new antibiotics, preventive or alternative strategies, yet the R&D investment from large pharmaceutical companies is on the wane due to lack of attractiveness of investment in this therapeutic area. Innovation is thus largely driven by small and medium biopharma companies, and European nations need to engage more extensively in supporting this innovation via new policies and R&D stimulating incentives. The BEAM Alliance has more than 50 biotech companies as members. The European consortium works to improve the regulatory, investment, and commercial environments in Europe for research, development, approval and market viability of new products combating antimicrobial resistance.

www.beam-alliance.eu

About BioVersys

The Swiss biopharmaceutical company BioVersys focuses on research and development of small molecules, which interfere with bacterial resistance mechanisms. With the company’s award-winning TRIC technology it will be possible to restore the efficacy of established antibiotics. By this means BioVersys addresses the high medical need for new treatments against life-threatening bacterial infections that emerged in recent years due to the resistance of bacterial strains against existing antibiotics. BioVersys’ compounds will be used in combination with existing antibiotics, thereby renewing efficacy as well as intellectual property for the established drug. The current research focus is Nosocomial Infections (hospital infections) and Tuberculosis.

www.bioversys.com

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