

PRESS STATEMENT

(Brussels, 24 October 2014) *Forging a network of previously unacquainted partners to exchange good practices and case studies is a very successful strategy to enhance the effective transfer of new biotechnologies in Europe. In the years to come, the seeds sown during the ETTBio project will grow into innovative biotech business projects, contributing to the economic development of the participating EU regions. This statement was issued at the occasion of the ETTBio closing conference, held on Friday 24 October 2014 at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.*

In the past four years, the Technical University of Dresden has been the lead partner of the ETTBio project. "Effective transfer of new technologies is a key component of regional economic development", says Dr. Nadine Schmieder-Galfe, the ETTBio project leader. "To better exploit the economic potential of research institutes and universities as a source of innovation, we have brought together ten project partners from seven EU member states. In a very collaborative setting, we have then identified, exchanged and shared good practices in biotech transfer. Today, these interactions have resulted in a very fertile soil for new business initiatives. All participating cities and regions have developed concrete plans to improve the effective transfer of new technologies in the life sciences sector."

The substantial investment needs that are characteristic for the biotechnological sector are a major hurdle on the way to commercial success. An interesting approach to overcome this hurdle had been developed in Flanders, where the Industrial Research Fund (IOF) provides funding to bridge the gap from basic research to proof-of-concept. Based on the Flemish example, a similar concept has now been developed in Dresden and preparations are on-going to have the concept implemented in Dresden and Saxony in the years to come. A second important need is business management training for new entrepreneurs in the biotech sector, as a means to enhance the commercial perspectives of promising but vulnerable entrepreneurial projects. In this

respect, the Catalanian BioEmprenadorXXI project serves as an excellent source of inspiration. BioEmprenadorXXI offers a guidance program to support the creation and growth of companies in the life sciences arena, yielding remarkable results: Over a 5 years period, 81 biotechnology business projects have participated in the one year program track, 34 of which ended up creating companies and 13 are still in the process of doing so. Concrete plans now exist to transpose the Catalanian program to Flanders. Thirdly, clustering biotech activities has proven an important driver for success. In the Moravian-Silesian Region (Czech Republic), a formalised biotechnology cluster is currently being established. Based on examples from other European regions, this organisation co-ordinates R&D activities, lobby efforts and support for international collaborations. In this way, the region's nascent biotechnology industry will gain critical mass and momentum in order to be competitive.

About ETTBio

The EU Interreg Ivc project ETTBio (Effective Technology Transfer in Biotechnology) started in 2012 and ends on 31 December 2014. The project's objective was to detect and exchange best practices in biotech transfer among ten partners from seven European regions: Dresden (Germany), Tartu (Estonia), Barcelona (Spain), London (UK), Warsaw (Poland), Ostrava (Czech Republic) and Flanders (Belgium). More information is available at <http://ettbio.eu>.

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