



Introduction

The European Polysaccharide Network of Excellence (EPNOE)

Because of recognition of the increasing economic importance of polysaccharides, the European Commission (EC) decided to support the European Polysaccharide Network of Excellence, better known as *EPNOE*. The EC project officially started in May 2005 and ran for 4 and a half years. It involved 16 European laboratories from 9 countries (see list at <http://www.epnoe.eu>). The main mission of EPNOE was to promote the use of polysaccharide renewable raw materials as feedstocks for the development of advanced multifunctional materials.

The project initially created an informal network made up of the 16 academic/research institutions. To allow this network to continue and expand a new formal structure, *EPNOE Association*, was created in 2007. *EPNOE Association* is the current independent non-profit making structure organizing all the EPNOE activities. It is only funded by membership fees. Members are the initial sixteen academic/research institutions plus companies. At the beginning of 2012, more than 20 SMEs and multinational companies working in various application fields such as food, paper, engineering and health are EPNOE members. EPNOE is now a durable structure for organizing research and education on polysaccharides at the European level. It is a complete, efficient and innovative research network on polysaccharide worldwide and a platform for bringing together companies and research centres.

A new EC-funded project, called EPNOE CSA, started in March 2012 and is planned to run for three years. EPNOE CSA is composed of the same 16 academic/research members of EPNOE. It aims at further strengthening academia/research – industry relationship and knowledge transfer in the polysaccharide field which resulted from the original EPNOE initiatives. A particular objective of EPNOE CSA is expansion of activities in health-related and food-related materials and products. A detailed account of EPNOE history can be found in Navard and Navard (2013).

EPNOE 2013 conference: EPNOE (European Polysaccharide Network of Excellence) and the Cellulose and Renewable Materials Division of the American Chemical Society (ACS) decided in 2011 to join their efforts in promoting basic and applied sciences of polysaccharides by organizing common events. One such event is EPNOE 2013. The successor to the preceding two conferences (EPNOE 2009 and EPNOE 2011). As for these conferences, we are expecting EPNOE 2013 to be a forum bringing together academic, industrial, and government scientists and students studying polysaccharides and polysaccharide-derived products. The topic of EPNOE 2013 is “Polysaccharides and polysaccharide-derived products; from basic science to applications”. EPNOE 2013 will take place in Nice, France, 21–24 October 2013. All information is available at <http://epnoe2013.sciencesconf.org>.

Reference

- Navard, J., & Navard, P. (2013). Challenges and opportunities in building a multinational, interdisciplinary research and education network on polysaccharides. In P. Navard (Ed.), *The European polysaccharide network of excellence (EPNOE). Research initiatives and results*. Wien: Springer-Verlag. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7091-0421-7_1

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