

Editorial



Sven Stegemann PhD, President of EAPB

It is just about 20 years ago that biotechnology started to penetrate the drug discovery and development process of the pharmaceutical industry and led to the creation of a myriad of small start up companies in this field. The euphoric expectations of the early times empowered a unique energy in the research community that gave us the opportunity to learn and bring biotechnology forward rather quickly. Even so biotechnology will remain an interdisciplinary science, it has evolved in a variety of specific areas of application of which the pharmaceutical research and development is by far the biggest one. In the light of decreasing R&D productivity in the pharmaceutical industry, biotechnology is still increasing its importance for drug discovery and development. Thanks to biotechnology, we are furthermore gaining access to treatments for diseases that could not be treated accurately so far.

Whenever a new science is born, scientists need a forum to address and discuss their science and the related challenges. When the European Association of Pharma Biotechnology (EAPB) was founded about 4 years ago, it grew up very quickly to a considerable organization of > 1400 members and ~50 corporate members representing a fairly well equilibrated group of scientists from industry,

academia and regulatory bodies involved in pharmaceutical biotechnology. Even though the EAPB is very focused on the pharmaceutical applications of biotechnology this area still remains very broad, starting from biotechnology in early drug discovery to biotechnology applications throughout the pharmaceutical, non-clinical and clinical development process up to the finished product design and its manufacturing. To combine the forces, especially in the overlapping areas with the traditional pharmaceutical products and their development, the EAPB has successfully executed an integrative approach by establishing a variety of strategic alliances and collaborations for example with the European Federation of Biotechnology (EFB), the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS), the Pan European Federation of Regulatory Affairs Societies (PEFRAS) & Mid-European group of Regulatory Affairs professionals (MEGRA) and several national associations across Europe.

As a result of these activities we have progressed tremendously with one of our key objectives to create awareness of the pharmaceutical biotechnology as an independent science and create a platform for the scientific exchange and scientific progression. To test the concept of a 'stand alone science', Elsevier and EAPB started a special section on Pharmaceutical Biotechnology in January 2003 in this Journal. Prof. Robert Gurny, Editor-in-Chief of the *EJPB* and Dr Gary Walsh, Scientific Secretary of EAPB, who led the section as the editor, faced such a tremendous response that Elsevier and EAPB both decided to go a step further in this successful partnership by an official collaboration with the *EJPB* journal.

It is our objective to continue and encourage the further involvement of pharmaceutical biotechnology together with Elsevier as well as all the scientists from academia, industry and regulatory bodies.

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