

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2nd EU-LAC Health Roadmapping Workshop Analyzing and benefitting from the current political scenario to strengthen EU-LAC Health Research Cooperation

Madrid, Spain, 26 - 27 February 2014

The 5th Workshop of EU-LAC Health was opened by the Secretary of State for Research, Development and Innovation of Spain and the Vice-Minister of Science and Technology of Costa Rica

The EU-LAC Health consortium invited the EC Policy Officer, Advisory Board members, scientific experts and policy-makers to the 2nd Roadmapping Workshop in Madrid, Spain. It took place in the premises of Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII), lead organizers were INNOVATEC as well as ISCIII. The meeting's main objectives were a) the elaboration on how to best utilize the current political scenario b) the exploitation of synergies with ongoing existing initiatives and c) the improvement of the main policy document to be produced by the project (Roadmap for a joint initiative on health research).

[EU-LAC Health](#) is a 5-year project financed by the European Union through the 7th Framework Program (Health theme). Its aim is to establish a consensus roadmap for cooperative health research between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. This roadmap has been and will continuously be developed including discussions and the advice of active scientists, policy-makers, programme owners and other stakeholders. The project foresees the establishment of an efficient coordination of health research policies and funding that will result in benefits from cooperation for both sides.



Photo: (from left to right) Antonio L. Andreu, Director General of ISCIII, Carmen Vela, Secretary of State for Research, Development and Innovation, Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness in Spain and Keilor Rojas, Vice-Minister of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications in Costa Rica.

The workshop was opened by two high level speakers from Spain and Costa Rica: Carmen Vela, Secretary of State for Research, Development and Innovation, Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness in Spain as well as Keilor Rojas, Vice-Minister of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications in Costa Rica. Costa Rica holds the *pro tempore* presidency of the CELAC (Community of Latin America and Caribbean States). Both speakers stressed the importance of collaboration in health research, the support to the project and their interest in follow the project progress. People face the same problems caused by diseases that do not stop at borders; therefore efforts should be made to jointly tackle these diseases.

Following the welcoming address a crucial aspect was discussed: the favorable current political scenario deriving from the EU-CELAC Senior Officials Meeting (EU-CELAC SOM). Since 2010, high-level Senior Officials from national bodies of both, the EU and CELAC countries, meet annually to implement the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (JIRI), an initiative that has been

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eulachealth@isciii.es www.eulachealth.eu

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initiated by the heads of state of both regions in order to strengthen the EU-CELAC cooperation. With the aim of finding common topics and agendas, several working groups have been created initially starting with groups on bioeconomy including food security, biodiversity and climate change, ICT (Information and communications technologies) and renewable energies. In April 2013, a new working group on health (SOM WGoH) has been established which not only stresses the importance of EU-CELAC cooperation in health research but also gives further visibility and importance to the project. In the discussion groups, the role of the EU-LAC Health project in this context was scrutinized and it was agreed that this project is well suited to serve as a technical support body to the SOM WGoH that can not only offer concrete call topics but also provide the Senior Officials with ideas on how to best institutionalize such collaboration.

Several other initiatives such as the European Infrastructure for Translational Medicine ([EATRIS-ERIC](#)) and the European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network ([ECRIN-ERIC](#)), both included in the ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) roadmap, [ALCUE-NET](#), and [ERANet-LAC](#) were presented. ERANet-LAC is an EU-funded project that specifically targets the CELAC region and intends to strengthen the cooperation in those areas that the SOM working groups are dealing with through the implementation of joint calls. As a first step, EU-LAC Health has produced several topics that will be presented at the next EU-CELAC SOM in order to get the commitment of the funding agencies and could be implemented by the ERANet-LAC. This could then function as a pilot case and a milestone for EU-LAC health research cooperation as well as show best practices. How to best open the existing Research Infrastructures for cooperation with CELAC countries still needs to be further explored.

The roadmap to be created by the EU-LAC Health project is a document that is aimed particularly at policy-makers. Next to a background explaining the political context, the document consists of a governance part as well as a proposed 'Scientific Research Agenda' produced in great joint effort by expert scientists from EU and CELAC and the project. In the discussion groups of the second day, ideas were put forward on how to best compile and arrange this document for the specific target group. Input from the policy-makers, experts and scientists were very useful and will be taken into account so that a maximum impact of the roadmap is reached.

The great feedback from the discussions and the enthusiastic and committed reactions of the audience demonstrated the great potential and need for a common approach to effectively institutionalize EU-LAC health research cooperation. All valuable outcomes and inputs from the discussions will be taken into account to further develop the roadmap as well as interact with the ongoing initiatives.

The next EU-LAC Health workshop will most likely take place at the end of October 2014.



More information can be found at the [Project-Homepage: www.eulachealth.eu](http://www.eulachealth.eu)

Project-Partners: ISCIII (Spain), MSCR-RIMAS (Costa Rica), INNOVATEC (Spain), COHRED (Switzerland), DLR (Germany), FIOCRUZ (Brazil), MINCyT (Argentina), APRE (Italy).

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