

## **Press Release, February 10, 2006**

by Christiane Eickelberg,  
Public Relations University of Giessen Lung Center (UGLC)

### **„Big Science“: Top Funding for EU Lung Research Project PULMOTENSION**

**Giessen. As of January 1, 2006, the European Union (EU) funds the Lung Research Project PULMOTENSION with an amount of Euro 11,4 Mio over a period of four years. The multidisciplinary approach integrates 31 institutions at top EU Centers in alliance with industrial partners in 12 European countries with the aim to combat and cure pulmonary hypertension (PH), a devastating lung disease. On February 9 and 10, 2006, the project leaders of PULMOTENSION held the constitutive meeting coordinated by Prof. Werner Seeger, Head of the University of Giessen Lung Center (UGLC) of the Justus-Liebig-University in Giessen, Germany.**

Pulmonary hypertension (PH) describes a group of chronic, prolonged crippling and fatal vascular diseases. It is characterized by high blood pressure in the lung vessels leading to right heart failure. PH often affects young or middle-aged patients, who suffer from progressive loss of exercise capacity and dyspnoea. As a result, this serious lung disease represents a major burden on our healthcare systems.

With the formation of PULMOTENSION, European Top centers for scientific and technical competence in PH have taken a decisive step in tackling this large medical problem: Connected into a single project they aim to better understand and find a cure for this serious disease, because the large and complex tasks can only be addressed with the collected multidisciplinary competence and critical mass assembled. This pan-European "Big Science"- initiative allows the collaborating researchers to investigate basic science questions in terms of clinical applicability and provides a unique potential for scientific breakthroughs, technological advances and new treatments in the field of pulmonary hypertension.

“In this translational research concept the lung experts work “from bench to bedside” or “from the molecule to the patient”: Over the next four years, we aim to uncover underlying molecular pathways of PH, identify distinct targets for anti-remodelling therapy, foster drug development based on these targets in alliance with industrial partners and exploitation facilities, and carefully test these new treatment options in preclinical and clinical trials“, explains Werner Seeger, Head of the University of Giessen Lung Center (UGLC) of the Justus-Liebig-University of Giessen, Germany. „This is a huge but thrilling organizational challenge for all of us“.

The combined expertise in “PULMOTENSION” extends from the initial discovery of gene mutations in PH to the establishment of new therapeutic regimen of PH. These include the discovery of BMPR2 mutations in PH, an effort led by Prof. Richard Trembath (King’s College, London, United Kingdom) or the introduction of sildenafil (Viagra®) into the treatment of PH by a team of physicians led by Prof. Friedrich Grimminger (UGLC, Germany).

At the kick-off-meeting of “PULMOTENSION” in Giessen on February 9 and 10, 2006, the lung experts elected a central steering committee for this consortium and

initiated research strategies, clinical trials and a European PH Tissue Bank and Registry.

For more information about PULMOTENSION and collaborating centers please visit:  
[www.uglc.de/eu-six.html](http://www.uglc.de/eu-six.html)