

# 15th Meeting of the EUROPEAN RESEARCH INITIATIVE ON CLL (ERIC/WP7)

Atlanta, Sunday Dec 9<sup>th</sup> 2007

(in context of the ELN Breakfast Meeting)

Official ELN PART: 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. (breakfast at 6.00 a.m.)

**WP7/ERIC PART: 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

**Hotel Ritz Carlton  
181 Peachtree Street, Atlanta (downtown)  
Grand Ball Room**

**TOP 1:** **E. Kimby (Stockholm/Sweden)**  
*Eva Kimby welcomed all participants.*

**TOP 2:** **P. Ghia (Milan/Italy)**  
*Current status of the EU framework program – “Lobbying for CLL”*  
Paolo Ghia presented in detail how the system of the EU frame program works. Briefly: The scientific topics supported by the EU frame program are updated on an annual basis, every 6 months “work programs” are emitted. On the EU level an advisory group consisting of scientists are involved in the decisions about the supported projects. Nevertheless the main selective work of the topics is done by the “program committee”, which consists of delegates of each EU country (not necessarily scientists, designated by the government). In April and September each year there is an official call for submission of new projects/topics. Thus, if CLL should become an ingredient of the EU frame program, it is important to “lobby” for CLL research by contacting the responsible delegates in each specific EU country and persuade him/her of the importance of CLL research. There was an intensive debate, whether it is “worth” to take on the investment of administrative work for an EU grant (much work for a small grant). One suggestion was, not only to lobby for CLL but for research on lymphoid malignancies in general to have at least one foot in the door. A list of the responsible delegates for all EU countries will be circulated among ERIC members.

**TOP 3:** **K. Stamatopoulos (Thessaloniki/Greece)**  
*ERIC consensus & review board on IgHV mutational analysis – update & upcoming workshop in Paris*  
Kostas Stamatopoulos reported about practical trouble issues in performing correct IGHV mutational analysis. Due to several IGHV web-based data bases available to date (i.e. IgBlast, IMGT/V etc.), which are not congruent to each other or not updated together, interpretation of an IGHV sequence may be variable or inaccurate (i.e. regarding HCDR3-boundaries, insertions/deletions, etc.). In order to enable researchers and lab scientists to interpret and handle IGHV mutational results correctly, an educational workshop (“2<sup>nd</sup> Educational Workshop on Immoglobulin Gene Analysis in CLL”) will be again carried out by the IGHV working group in Paris on September 25-26 2008. It was noted by

participants, that the date needs re-confirmation, since the international CLL workshop of the MDAnderson Cancer Center Houston takes place on September 14-17 2008 and may make it difficult for interested people to attend both meetings. For more information the following webpage may be visited: [www.igcll.com](http://www.igcll.com)

**TOP 4: F. Cymbalista (Paris/France)**

*Harmonization of ZAP70 analysis – update*

Florence Cymbalista reported that there were no significant news compared to the status of the ZAP70 project reported by Remi Letestu in Vienna 2007. The results of the ZAP70 e-trial are currently summarized to be published as a harmonized technique for ZAP70 analysis, which is planned to be released as a minimal recommendation on the ERIC and/or institutional webpage. Florence mentioned, that it is probably difficult and not possible to give a general harmonized recommendation for ZAP70 analysis, which will be acceptable for labs, which have already developed their own habits for the analysis. The experience of the performing lab scientist or cytometrist may be as much influential as the use of different antibodies etc. There was an intensive discussion about this conclusion of the project, which is one of the main harmonization projects of ERIC. The discussion needs to be carried on in Heidelberg.

**TOP 5: S. Stilgenbauer (Ulm/Germany)**

*p53 working group and harmonization of cytogenetic analysis – current status*

Stephan Stilgenbauer reported about the current status of the p53 working group. Samples of 51 patients have been exchanged between Germany and France, which have led to concordant results regarding FISH analysis and p53 mutational status in all cases. Samples of 10 patients have been exchanged with the Royal Marsden Hospital. The results were again comparable except below a FISH threshold of 20% for 17p-deleted cells. In such cases with low amounts of 17p-deletions incongruent FISH results between different labs make interpretation of their significance difficult. In the UK CLL4 trial 5% of patients had shown a 17p-deletion level of 5-20%. The therapeutic handling of such patients has to be further investigated, since they have an unfavourable prognosis as patients with deletion levels upon 20%.

Further presentation of the p53 working group were done by Sarka Popsovila (Czech Republic, report about mutational analysis of cytidine desaminase), Eric Eldering (The Netherlands, investigation of several genes puma, bax, p21 etc.), Andrew Pettit (UK, p21 mut. analysis) and Thorsten Zenz (Germany).

**TOP 6: B. Eichhorst/P. Hillmen (Cologne/Germany, Leeds/UK)**

*Improvement of long-term follow-up of CLL patients in European trials: Proposal of an ERIC initiative*

Barbara Eichhorst and Pete Hillmen proposed a new project under the umbrella of ERIC, which will aim to acquire long-term follow up data of patients treated in IITrials primarily carried out by companies. Often companies terminate trial follow ups of patients when the primary endpoint i.e. for the approval of their drug is reached, important long-term follow up data of the patients thereafter are often not of interest or get lost. Barbara and Pete developed a draft of a possible follow up documentation (CRF) page, which would be required to be filled out by

physicians within this project. The project requires thorough cooperation with companies. There should be no duplication of study documentation i.e. with existing study groups. The CRF draft will be circulated among interested people to get feedback on possible improvements.

**TOP 7: All participants:**

- There was an intensive debate about the future concept and structure of ERIC. All participants and people interested in ERIC/CLL are invited to continue this discussion and brain storming for future projects on the next meeting in Heidelberg
- The next meeting will be held as a work package meeting in the context of the annual symposium of the European LeukemiaNet in Heidelberg/Germany on January 29 2008