BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences

Industry calls for effective biotech policies in Europe

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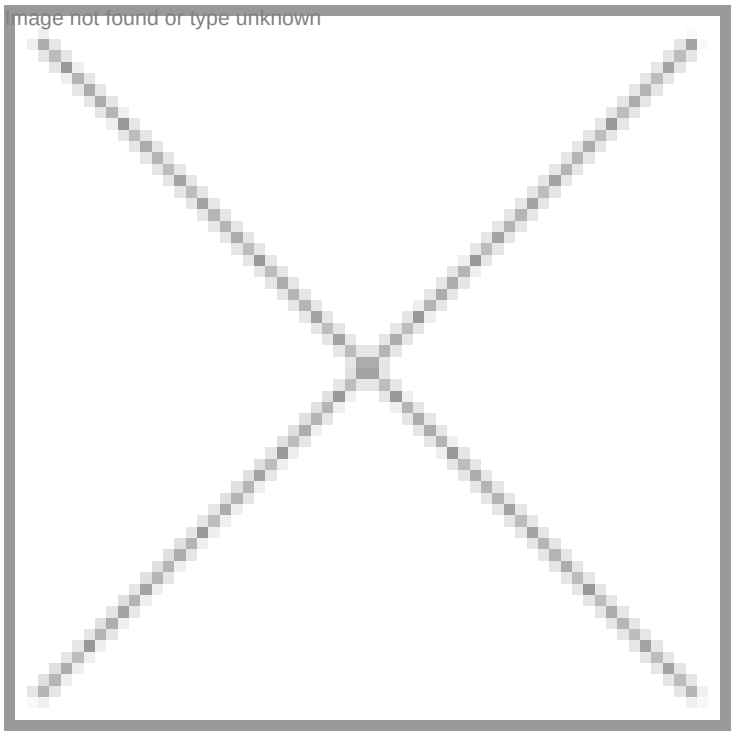

The biotechnology industry bodies like France Biotech, the French Biotechnology Industry Association, EuropaBio, The European Association of Bioindustries have called for the need to pursue ambitious actions to develop real and effective biotechnology industrial policies that should integrate research, development, and biomanufacturing.
With 190 medicines and vaccines already available and more than 400 therapeutic products under development in 2004, biotechnologies are targeting over 300 million patients in the world. These medicines are offering safer, more efficient medicines with reduced side effects, and new therapeutic strategies for very incapacitating illnesses, which have gone untreated until the arrival of biotechnology.

Small and medium-sized biotechnology companies and researchers are working to renew the portfolios of therapeutic products available to doctors and patients by undertaking cutting-edge research and using the very latest healthcare technologies. Thus it is crucial to stimulate the environment for these young innovative biotechnology companies and tighten their collaboration with academic research and the pharmaceutical industry where both the know-how and capacity lie to develop and commercialize their products.

The components of an efficient national and European policy in life sciences are well identified and it is now time for the European governments and various authorities to act by taking into account the industry's recommendations.

Source: www.europabio.org

BIA welcomes publication on pre-emption guidelines

The BioIndustry Association (BIA) has welcomed the publication of the report by Paul Myners on pre-emption. The report reviews whether the current pre-emption guidelines in the UK inhibit the ability of certain public companies, including bioscience companies, to raise finance from the capital markets. It concludes that the current blanket approach to disapplying pre-emption rights is not working as intended due to a rigid interpretation of the existing guidelines.

The report recommends that the current guidelines should be replaced with new guidance emphasising a case-by-case engagement between a company's directors and shareholders. Myners further recommends the formation of a new pre-emption group with wider membership to take a more proactive approach to monitoring the application of such guidance.

"This is excellent news both for the UK bioscience companies and for the future of the bioscience industry in this country. It is extremely positive that this important report has confirmed that there is an issue with the current pre-emption guidelines for UK bioscience companies. It affects their ability to raise finance from the capital markets and thus their ability to progress the development of their businesses," said Aisling Burnand, chief executive of the BIA.

Paul Myners has concluded in his report that the principle of pre-emption rights is a valuable one, which should be upheld. "The BIA absolutely endorses that: shareholders own the company and the BIA strongly supports the principles of promoting and protecting shareholder value," Burnand added. The report also highlights other issues affecting the bioscience-funding environment. The BIA will be working with all stakeholders to look into further details.

Source: www.bioindustry.org

Dr Lester Crawford may become next FDA Commissioner

Dr Lester Crawford is likely to become the next FDA Commissioner as the US President George Bush intends to nominate him for this prestigious post. Reacting to this Jim Greenwood, president of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) said, "The President's nominee, Dr Lester Crawford, is an excellent choice to lead the FDA during this critical time. His regulatory experience across the consumer health and safety spectrum including medicine, agriculture and food safety will serve the agency well. Dr Crawford has done a remarkable job as acting commissioner of the FDA. His credentials and experience make him well suited to lead this critical consumer protection agency. We enthusiastically support Dr Crawford as FDA Commissioner. This nomination sends the right signal to patients and consumers, that there will be vision and leadership in the agency."

"Because BIO's member companies are on the cutting edge of developing new pharmaceutical, biological and agricultural products, we depend on an FDA that embraces innovation while guarding the public health," Greenwood added.