

# “Visual Impairment and Degeneration: A Road-map for Vision Research within Europe”

## Summary of the performed work and main results

### (09-2010 – 02-2012)

The European FP7-supported Coordination and Support Action “Visual Impairment and Degeneration: A Road-map for Vision Research within Europe (‘EuroVisionNet’)” aims to coordinate and consolidate Vision Research activities and policies in order to overcome the national fragmentation.

The following main objectives are addressed within the project:

- Better definition and acceptance of Vision Research within the scientific community
- Overcome the still existing fragmentation of European Vision Research efforts
- Reduce duplication of research efforts
- Increase communication between clinical and basic researchers
- Foster collaborations between academic research and industry
- Support clarity regarding national and international policy mandates relating to clinical research activities
- Develop a better educational concept in the vision research community

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## 1 PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE BOOK “A VISION FOR HORIZON 2020 – A European Strategic Roadmap for Vision Research and Ophthalmology. T.H. Wheeler-Schilling, J. Kremers, E. Zrenner (eds.), Shaker-Verlag, Aachen, 2012, ISBN 978-3-8440-0883-8



Introduced by E. Zrenner, C. Fasser and T. Wheeler-Schilling in the White book “A Vision for Horizon 2020” 75 experts out of twelve European countries (Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Norway, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, France, Sweden, Austria and Ireland) are covering all relevant subjects of Vision Research and Ophthalmology in order to predict future developments. The White Book aims at convincing the scientific community in Europe that ophthalmology is a discipline not only at the forefront of research but also at the forefront of translation of its scientific results into clinical practice. It should increase enormously the awareness of funding organizations and the concern of politicians about the further development of

health and research in Europe concerning especially eye health.

## 2 CONSOLIDATED EUROPEAN VISION CONFERENCES IN LONDON (27 MAY 2011) AND BRUSSELS (22 JUNE 2011)

Both events were well attended and gave a good overview of current and future treatments for blinding eye diseases.



The talks incorporated the most recent scientific developments of the post genomic area each presented by a renowned expert of the field. As part of the Consolidated Vision Conferences 2011 within 'EuroVisionNet' the suggested strategies should lead to sight-saving treatments, reduce visual impairment and blindness, and improve the quality of life for people of all ages. The conference was implemented under the patronage of Dr. Charles Tannock, MEP.



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## 3 WHITE PAPER ON "TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH IN OPHTHALMOLOGY AND VISION SCIENCES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION"

The purpose of this White Paper is to stimulate the process for translational research between the European Centres and to synergize multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary clinical and translational research. Translational research, usually called "bench to bedside", applies discoveries generated through basic science research to the development and testing of preventive and treatment interventions and vice versa. Translational research may be seen as a five-phase model of intervention research that is commonly used to describe the continuum of biomedical research, from basic to applied science. Translational research is patient-oriented and implicates an approach to health research where there is a permanent interchange between basic and applied science. Excellence in clinical research is a fundamental component of good translational research.



An article on “Translational Research in Ophthalmology – A European Perspective” was published in 2011 in the European Ophthalmic Review (Cunha-Vaz J, Zrenner E: Translational Research in Ophthalmology: A European Perspective. Eur Ophth Rev 2011; 5(1):13-15).

## 4 FOSTERING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The basis of fostering public and private partnerships is an apparent lack of communication and motivation in the European vision research community that is needed to collaborate with industry and other potential funding and research partners. This lack is apparent when evaluating the funding portfolio/sources used to support basic and clinical research activities within European academic and medical institutions.



The European vision research institutions must be aware of the benefits of developing private and

public partnerships. Some benefits include:

- Increased funding for and awareness of vision research
- Less dependency on single funding source (less risk)
- Technology transfer and commercialization activities
- Increased awareness of vision research developments, including knowledge transfer activities
- Maximizing the accessibility of multiple research disciplines within research institutions.

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