

# PROJECT FINAL REPORT

## Publishable

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**Project acronym: LASERLAB-EUROPE CONT**

**Project title: European Laser Laboratories Integrated Initiative Continued**

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## Final publishable summary report



<http://www.laserlab-europe.net/>

LASERLAB-EUROPE exists as an *Integrated Infrastructure Initiative* (I3) since FP6 and combines the majority of the largest national laboratories in the area of laser-based inter-disciplinary research at the European level. Participants of the original FP6 project and the present 15-month continuation are 17 laser infrastructures from 9 European countries, including new EU member states. Together they represent a comprehensive collection of modern laser technologies and laser research, and pursue applications in sciences and life sciences through in-house research and services to the relevant communities. They are complemented within the Consortium by selected laboratories with special expertise and equipment which are crucial for the further development of the field.

At the beginning of FP7 the consortium was granted a 15-months continuation project called LASERLAB-EUROPE CONT allowing for an uninterrupted provision of Access opportunities for the scientific community and a continued networking and cooperation among the Laser Research Infrastructures for the effective and competitive exploitation and development of European resources.

The networking activities had a vital structuring effect in the LASERLAB-EUROPE consortium by fostering cooperation, best practices and exchanges. Successful series of workshops for scientific and technological exchanges as well as for strategic issues addressing the development of Laser infrastructures and research were complemented by tools and programmes for inner and outer communication and information exchange. The networking activities largely helped to boost the efficiency of research and development within the consortium and for the benefit of the users' community. Their community-forming effect was also vital for the establishment of two major ESFRI laser projects, the first international laser infrastructures world wide.

The following networking activities were performed:

- The “virtual laser infrastructure”: professional set-up and operation of an internet platform, on which all activities are projected, comprising specifically a joint online access proposal management and reporting system as well as the web presence with a content management system for internal and external communication, allowing for decentralized authoring, editing and publishing of information on the external and internal project webpages.
- Common publicity of actions and opportunities, dealing with all aspects of internal and external publicity, i.e. communication and information dissemination within the network, as

well as enhancement of public awareness of the activities, and services (Access, expert knowledge, etc.) of the network in order to promote the visibility as European point of contact for laser-based research. In particular, the publication of the well-established LASERLAB-EUROPE newsletter was continued, a joint call for proposals for access to the facilities was published, and information material such as brochures, flyers and folders were distributed at conferences and other events.

- Transverse Activities aim at the improvement of internal resources, in particular equipment, expertise, quality and safety issues, through the interaction of scientific and technical staff on a person-to-person basis. The successful series of common workshops was continued in order to follow up on previous discussions and new developments and to achieve network-specific synergies, thus creating a sustainable and structuring culture of information exchange for the Consortium as a whole. The workshop topics chosen under the LASERLAB CONT contract addressed EU Target Fabrication Capabilities and Radioprotection Safety.
- Monitoring infrastructures – users connections: The activity aims at monitoring and improving the relations between users and access providing infrastructures (“customer relations”). Annual User meetings at Consortium level are intended to bring together a significant number of Users, facilitating and fostering their exchanges with the infrastructures, discuss new experimental set-up or proposals, presenting existing facilities, reporting I3 activities for the beneficial information of yet unexplored communities, and present scientific results. The user meeting for LASERLAB CONT was held in conjunction with a Foresight workshop (see below) on “Trends of Laser Applications in Biology and Biomedicine” which was found to be very useful and stimulating for all participants. In addition, user feedback on the quality of the Access activities is collected and evaluated regularly by means of a questionnaire. A second questionnaire on long term needs was developed.
- Foresight activities: The goal of the activity is to bring together the participating laser infrastructures as scientific leaders in their field to make major contributions towards the strategic roadmap in the field of laser science and applications in the European Research Area. The outcome of this activity can only be a long term one: it should allow for optimized new Infrastructures in the future, and set directions to maintain Europe at the forefront of laser science. Within LASERLAB-EUROPE CONT a foresight workshop was held connecting laser research with biology and medicine, thus covering an interdisciplinary topic with a high impact on many partners within the consortium and the research community at large. In addition, the topic is relevant for many User projects within the Access activity, so that synergies were created by combining the foresight workshop with the annual User meeting.

The Transnational Access activities in LASERLAB-EUROPE are fully integrated under a single structure with one unique entry point for requesting access and a single external selection panel which controls the scientific quality. The concept of “Dynamic Access” made it possible to provide about 850 access days to more than 180 users over the duration of the contract being considerably more than initially proposed (17% and 49%, respectively), while it ensured individual flexibility to the 15 host facilities in their response to User demands. LASERLAB-EUROPE considers this a very satisfactory success of the internal Access Implementation Policy, which would not have been possible without close monitoring and thoughtful steering by the Access Board.

The Users who gain access to an extremely stimulating scientific environment to pursue multidisciplinary programmes of high-quality research seem to appreciate the Access offers and the implementation rather highly. This became apparent during the annual Users Meeting and it is supported by the continuous evaluation of LASERLAB-EUROPE's internal User Questionnaire. A large number of publications resulting from the LASERLAB Access programme underpins the scientific success of the access activity.

The successful cooperation of the project partners and extensive networking efforts between LASERLAB-EUROPE and potential new partner infrastructures in the new member states with the goal of their full integration into the network in FP7 resulted in a substantially enlarged and reshaped consortium in FP7, reflecting the growth of the European Union from 15 to 27 member states.

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