

Dear Visitor,

Welcome again to the IVTIP website. I do hope that it will encourage you to share with us your passion and commitment for the 3Rs strategies in general, and for replacement strategies specifically.

Since 2008, **IVTIP has gained greater visibility**. I believe that is the result of enthusiastic public relations carried out by an **active and driven IVTIP Board, enthusiastic pro-active IVTIP members**, organization of **open annual discussion forums** addressing issues that are critical for test development, implementation and acceptance, and **publications** communicating the IVTIP view emerging from these discussions.

The higher visibility has changed IVTIP from being a pure European platform to **a global platform** embracing companies and organizations from Europe, USA and Brazil. During the last 18 months the membership has increased rapidly to **43 full members** with another **2 potential members** as of today (31.05.2011). There is no need to say that this expansion has an impact on the quality of the **networking activities**, making it very likely that you **find the expertise** you need or that your situation can be analyzed from **various scientific angles**.

The IVTIP members still represent the various industry sectors, but there has been a shift from large companies to small and medium size companies (SMEs) and contract research organizations (CROs). Obviously, IVTIP proved at the time not competitive enough with respect to the European Partnership for Alternative Approaches to Animal Testing (EPAA) to keep the larger companies interested. We are looking for strategies showing these larger players that IVTIP has an added value to EPAA (e.g. assessment of the applicability of EPAA recommendations, implementation of these recommendations). This added value is being recognized by SMEs and CROs who need to **make connections** and **understand processes** to help their businesses grow in an arena where 3Rs strategies are gaining importance at all levels in product development.

IVTIP decided to pursue new opportunities for driving the implementation and acceptance of replacement strategies by industry and regulatory authorities by opening up its membership for CROs involved in product testing. It was recognized that **CROs are commercial service-oriented organizations that have to give priority to what the customers want, i.e. tests (primarily animal-based) required by legislation and guidelines**. For IVTIP it is important that CROs joining the platform implement **refinement** and **reduction** strategies when animal experimentation is performed. IVTIP also recognizes that CRO's form a crucial interface between test developers, test users and regulatory authorities. Thus, having CROs as members of the platform is seen as a way to place IVTIP close to the real challenges facing 3Rs strategies in general and **replacement** strategies specifically.

During the IVTIP Spring Meeting in Monaco (26-28.04.2011) a historical step was taken. **IVTIP, ESTIV and CAAT-EU agreed to collaborate** (i) to optimize the exploitation of the synergies that exist between the three organizations with the objective to improve the flow of relevant knowledge between academia, industry and regulatory bodies, and (ii) to stimulate the application of *in vitro* tests by industry and the acceptance of these tests by regulatory authorities.

I would like to conclude my letter by underlining that in order to become an IVTIP member one has to demonstrate **an active and genuine interest in *in vitro* testing** to be used in regulatory/safety testing or for early decision-making in compound discovery and development. New procedures for enrollment of members and for assuring agreement with the IVTIP objectives have been adopted.

IVTIP membership also implies **endorsement of "The 21st Century Toxicity Testing" strategy** as the ultimate replacement of animal experimentation for regulatory/safety testing. IVTIP members are supportive of applying opportunities resulting in reduction of animal number or refinement of existing animal experiments **if they contribute to the development of replacement strategies**.

My invitation to you:

*Are you a scientist working in industry (including SMEs and CROs) with great passion for any of the aspects of the 3Rs, and pursuing implementation and acceptance of 3R-based methods? I hereby invite you and your company to **join IVTIP** and to help it accomplish its objectives. Should you be in doubt, you can ask the IVTIP Secretariat to invite you as an observer that gives you the opportunity to join one of our meetings to discover and learn more about this growing and important association.*

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Dr. Erwin Roggen – President IVTIP