

**Initial announcement
of the
First Open Workshop
of the
Multidisciplinary European Low Dose Initiative
(MELODI)
to promote
Low Dose Radiation Risk Research in Europe**

Dear Participant,

In the final report to the European Commission 2009 the High Level and Expert Group (HLEG) (www.hleg.de) concluded that there are a number of open scientific questions which should be resolved in order to consolidate the European radiation protection framework in the area of low dose exposure to ionising radiation (below 100 mSv and at low dose rate).

The report points to the complexity and interrelation of these open questions, which require a multidisciplinary and carefully coordinated approach to be answered. It further defines the first steps towards a 'Strategic Research Agenda' (SRA) for low dose research in Europe. The HLEG affirmed that several national institutions in Europe with scientific and regulatory assignments in radiation protection are willing to formally set up a joint R&D platform named 'Multidisciplinary European Low Dose Initiative' (MELODI) to promote low dose radiation risk research in Europe in order to implement the recommendations of the HLEG. This process should lead to a sustainable integration of European and national funded research in this area within Europe.

To date the five national institutions from EU member states **Bundesamt für Strahlenschutz** (BfS) from Germany, **Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique** (CEA) from France, **Institut de Radioprotection et de Sûreté Nucléaire** (IRSN) from France, **Istituto Superiore di Sanità** (ISS) from Italy and **Säteilyturvakeskus** (STUK) from Finland have committed themselves to the open integration process MELODI by signing a Letter of Intent (LoI). This LoI is publicly available on www.hleg.de. The MELODI platform under creation by these institutions will be open for membership to other national institutions from EU member states competent in radiation protection, willing and able to participate fully in the initiative (new MELODI signatories). The wider scientific community and interested stakeholders are asked to collaborate with MELODI.

MELODI will promote an open interdisciplinary approach, implementing joint research activities in the fields of biology, toxicology, dosimetry, physics and epidemiology, and focussing on the priority issues for radiation protection research as identified by HLEG.

This process will include the definition of a carefully laid out SRA, the implementation of roadmaps, adequately scoping the research areas and prioritising specific topics for immediate and medium term action. The key research fields identified by HLEG are (i) the shape of the dose-effect-relationship at low doses, (ii) variations in individual radiation sensitivity, and (iii) non-cancer effects of radiation, along with three cross-cutting themes (j) tissue sensitivities to cancer, (jj) risk from internal exposures, and (jjj) radiation quality.

For this purpose, the Lol signatory institutions have proposed the setting up of a support network which should be operational in 2010, providing an organisational framework and dedicated funding in order to start the implementation of the HLEG recommendations.

With a view to initiating this process as early as possible, the Federal Office for Radiation Protection in Germany (BfS), acting on behalf of the MELODI signatories, will organize the First Open Workshop of the 'Multidisciplinary European Low Dose Initiative' (MELODI) to promote low dose radiation risk research in Europe on September 28th and 29th, 2009 in Stuttgart, Germany.

The workshop's objectives are

- to present the multidisciplinary approach proposed by HLEG and the instruments to implement the recommendations on the EU level - MELODI and a support network including the process of open participation in the platform (for the scientific and regulatory community as well as for stakeholders), and in the future research programme calls,
- to review the state of knowledge on low dose radiation effects at the international level, with a focus on identifying open questions and uncertainties relevant to radiation protection,
- to develop a SRA for low dose research in Europe and roadmaps for the key research fields as identified by HLEG,
- to scope the research area and to prioritise topics of immediate and medium term action for each of the key research fields,
- to facilitate the launch of calls for research proposals in prioritised topics,

The first research programme calls under the auspices of MELODI will be realised under the umbrella of the MELODI support network from 2010 onwards. MELODI signatories will scope their national programmes along the SRA and roadmaps to complement low dose research in Europe.

Thus, this First Open Workshop of MELODI, open to all interested scientific and regulatory organisations and stakeholders, will provide opportunities for open discussions with the goal to develop a common view on regulatory scientific strategies in the field of low dose radiation protection research in Europe and on research priorities to answer key questions in this field. The achievement of a closely connected vision of research needs and science based regulatory needs will be an important step forward to shape future radiation protection research in European, and to optimize radiation protection strategies.

I invite all interested scientists and regulators in the field of radiation protection and look forward to your participation in the First Open Workshop of MELODI on September 28th and 29th, 2009, in Stuttgart, Germany.

Detailed information will be available online (<http://hleg.de/melodi.html>).

Yours sincerely,

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on behalf of the
MELODI signatories