



Innovative Medicines Initiative

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PRESS RELEASE

TOP PORTUGUESE AND FINNISH SCIENTISTS TO LEAD IMI SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- **Professor Maria Beatriz da Silva Lima of the University of Lisbon in Portugal is elected Chair of the IMI Scientific Committee.**
- **Professor Markus Perola of Finland's National Institute for Health and Welfare is elected Vice Chair.**
- **The pair were elected by their fellow committee members.**

BRUSSELS, 15 January 2014 – Professor Maria Beatriz da Silva Lima of the University of Lisbon in Portugal will be the new Chair of the IMI Scientific Committee, the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) announced today. The Vice Chair will be Professor Markus Perola of Finland's National Institute for Health and Welfare. The pair were elected by the rest of the 12-strong committee, which is made up of experts in diverse areas of medical research from across Europe.

'The IMI Scientific Committee consists of some of the most skilled scientists in Europe, and being part of it is one of the highlights of my scientific career. To be appointed Chair is a great honour,' said Professor da Silva Lima, who is an expert in pharmacology and pharmacotoxicology. 'From the start, IMI has been for me an enormously exciting project for countless reasons. Thanks to IMI, we have seen an enormous reformulation of the European research environment as well as researchers attitude. This re-thinking of the full drug development process is the most challenging and exciting exercise that I have experienced during my entire working life. Finally, there is huge potential to expand the principles underlying IMI to the rest of the world.'

Professor Perola, whose research focuses on genetics and other risk factors for common diseases, commented: 'I am very glad of the appointment. As Vice Chair, I hope to be able to give better advice to people with questions about IMI and thus potentially help people to build up better consortia for IMI calls. I am very excited about working for IMI for the opportunities it gives me to network with people active in drug development and related fields. Public-private partnership is an underused tool in Europe, and as a public servant, I see a lot of potential in it to advance the health and welfare of all people.'

IMI Executive Director Michel Goldman said: 'The Scientific Committee represents the voice of the scientific community within IMI, and their input is vital to our success. I am looking forward to working with Maria Beatriz da Silva Lima and Markus Perola, and the rest of the committee, to foster open collaboration in pharmaceutical research.'

Professor da Silva Lima added: 'I hope that the Committee will play a strong role in ensuring that results from IMI projects are applied so that they can contribute to the goal of IMI, which is a more successful medicines development process and, ultimately, improved health for patients. At a national level, I also hope all Scientific Committee members will have the opportunity to raise awareness of IMI in their own countries.'

The Scientific Committee provides the IMI Governing Board and Executive Office with strategic, scientific advice, for example on the IMI research agenda and the annual scientific priorities (which form the basis of the Call topics). In addition, the Scientific Committee participates in the consultations on new topics for Calls for proposals, and plays an active role in reviews of ongoing IMI projects. Members are nominated by IMI's States Representatives Group and appointed by the Governing Board.





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#ENDS#

Notes to Editors

- For **more information** on the Scientific Committee, including a full list of members and their biographies, visit www.imi.europa.eu/content/scientific-committee
- The biographies of the Chair and Vice-Chair are below in the Annex.

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About IMI

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is the world's largest public-private partnership in health. IMI is improving the environment for pharmaceutical innovation in Europe by engaging and supporting networks of industrial and academic experts in collaborative research projects. The European Union contributes €1 billion to the IMI research programme, and this is matched by in kind contributions worth at least another €1 billion from the member companies of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).

The Innovative Medicines Initiative currently supports 42 projects, many of which are already producing impressive results. The projects are all working to address the biggest challenges in drug development, with the goal of accelerating the development of safer and more effective treatments for patients.

More info on IMI: www.imi.europa.eu

Follow us on Twitter: [@IMI_JU](https://twitter.com/IMI_JU)

Annex – Biographies of IMI Scientific Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

Maria Beatriz Da Silva Lima (Chair)

Professor Maria Beatriz Da Silva Lima is currently member of the General Council of the Universidade de Lisboa, Sub-Director of the Faculty of Pharmacy of the Universidade de Lisboa and Professor of Pharmacology and Pharmacotoxicology and Head of Pharmacological Sciences at the university. She is also the Coordinator of the Pharmacological Sciences Research Group at the University of Lisbon's Research Institute for Medicines and Pharmaceutical Sciences (iMED.UL).

Previous positions

- Member of the Research Agenda discussion group which led to the emergence of the IMI research programme, including the discussion on preclinical epigenetic carcinogenesis and IMI training programme

Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) - Executive Office

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- Preclinical expert at European Medicines Agency (EMA) and Infarmed (Portuguese agency)
- Chair of the Safety Working Party of the EMA
- Portuguese delegate of the CHMP (Committee for Human Medicinal Products of the EMA)
- Member of the CAT (Committee of Advanced Therapies of the EMA)
- Member of the SAWP (Scientific Advice Working Party of the EMA)
- Member of the Non-clinical Working Group of the Paediatric Committee of the EMA
- Member of expert panels assessing Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) grants in the field of nonclinical development of orphan drugs.
- Member of the workshop panel discussing the candidate topics for IMI's 4th Call for proposals

Fields of expertise – Research interests

- Preclinical development of new clinical candidates, data generation / organisation to support first-in-human studies
- Scientific and regulatory aspects
- Molecular mechanisms of metabolic diseases, particularly diabetes
- Cognitive implications of diabetes, and involvement of the angiotensin pathways
- Cellular cascades in smooth muscle contractility and inflammation

Markus Perola (Vice Chair)

Professor Markus Perola is Research Professor at the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and a Group Leader at the Institute of Molecular Medicine Finland (FIMM). He is also a Visiting Professor at the Estonian Genome Project at the University of Tartu. Professor Perola is also a section editor for the European Journal of Human Genetics. He is a vice-chair of the coordinating ethical board of the Helsinki University hospital district and has positions of trust in the Finnish Medical Association. His publication list includes over 200 original articles. Dr Perola is also a practicing physician in Helsinki Western Emergency Hospital, Finland.

Previous positions

- DNA-extraction core unit and storage leader in the National Public Health Institute, Finland
- Genetic advisory board member, ASCOT (multinational research project on hypertensive medication and genetic variation)
- Scientific Secretary of the Steering Group, GENOMEUTWIN (EU-funded project)
- Team Leader, Common Disease Genetics, National Public Health Institute, Department of Molecular Medicine
- Genetic Steering Group member, GEHA (Genetics of Healthy Aging) project
- Leader of several work packages in various EU projects

Fields of expertise – Research interests

- -omical associations of diseases of public interest (genomics, epigenomics, metabolomics, transcriptomics, phenomics)
- Genetic and other risk factors for common disease
- Pathophysiology of diseases
- Public health matters, prevention
- Leadership of genomic research of large population cohorts in THL
- Coordination of and collaboration with large biobank projects in THL and internationally