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ATTENTION SCIENCE EDITORS

HARMONIZING BIOBANK RESEARCH - AN ACHIEVABLE WORLD-WIDE GOAL

Joint Meeting of Major Biobanking Organisations

Oslo, Norway: March 9th 2009

National biobanks play a vital role in modern health research by providing a goldmine of stored human biological samples and data, but they are expensive to run. Can we make better use of these invaluable resources by collaborating across national borders on a larger scale? This is the theme of an international conference being held in March 2009.

How can we maximize the value and use of biobanks through harmonization?

The conference is co-organised by PHOEBE (Promoting Harmonization of Epidemiological Biobanks in Europe), P3G (Public Population Project in Genomics) and BBMRI (Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure) and will take place on the 25th – 27th March 2009 in Brussels, Belgium. Bringing together leading scientists at the cutting-edge of genomic and biobank-based research the conference will discuss new directions in international harmonisation of biobanks.

Over 250 participants from over 30 countries are expected to attend the meeting. P3G and BBMRI will also hold their annual meetings prior to this conference.

The conference begins on March 25th with a keynote address by Professor Ruth Chadwick from the University of Cardiff about Harmonisation and Ethics. On the following two days there will be a range of scientific sessions where over 25 experts from around the world will address issues about how to get the best value and use from harmonised biobanks.

Venue:

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre
Avenue du Boulevard 17
B-1210 Brussels, Belgium

If you would like to attend but have not yet registered, or would like to arrange an interview with any of the conference speakers, please contact Elisabeth Shaw (Elisabeth.shaw@fhi.no).

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ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

PHOEBE

PHOEBE is a coordination action funded by the 6th Framework Program of the European Commission. It is coordinated from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and includes 18 partners in 13 countries. PHOEBE identifies and explores key issues to help to ensure that Europe makes best use of its rich array of population-based biobanks and longitudinal cohort studies. The ultimate aim is to harmonise those features that will help to: (1) promote communication between major biobanking initiatives; (2) enhance the effective sharing and synthesis of information and data; and (3) avoid the expensive mistakes and inefficiencies that can arise when individual initiatives repeatedly "re-invent the wheel". PHOEBE work is broadly focused around five main themes: epidemiology and biostatistics, opportunities for future biobanking in Europe, database and biobank information management systems, strategies for genotyping in large scale studies, and ethical and societal issues.

P³G

The Public Population Project in Genomics (P3G) is a not-for-profit international consortium to promote collaboration between researchers in the field of population genomics.

It has been launched in order to provide the international population genomics community with the resources, tools and know-how to facilitate data management for improved methods of knowledge transfer and sharing.

Its main objective consists in the creation of an open, public and accessible knowledge database. The motto is transparency and collaboration.

BBMRI

BBMRI is a project funded by the 7th Framework Program of the European Commission. Its mission is to prepare for the construction of a pan-European Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure (BBMRI) for biomedical and biological research in Europe and worldwide, building on existing infrastructures, resources and technologies, specifically complemented with innovative components and properly embedded into European ethical, legal and societal frameworks.

- To benefit European health-care and medical research
- To have a sustainable legal and financial conceptual framework for a pan-European Biobank infrastructure.
- To expand and secure competitiveness of European research and industry in a global context, especially in the field of medicine and biology.