

## INNOVATIVE MEDICINE INITIATIVE (IMI)

### *Initiative implemented jointly by the European Commission and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA)*

The IMI Platform, a new tool for public-private cooperation of the 7<sup>th</sup> FPRD, was launched on 30 April 2008. On this occasion, the European Commission and the pharmaceutical industry announced an investment of two billion euros to discover new tools and new methodologies intended to accelerate the development of new drugs and eliminate the bottlenecks currently existing in research.

*“Competition is fierce, but we must restore the ranking of the European pharmaceutical industry. In 1998, we invented 7 new drugs out of 10 and now the figure is only 3 in 10. The new drugs initiative (IMI) will enable us to regain our leadership.”* Arthur Higgins, president of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and Bayer Healthcare.

*“The Innovative Medicine Initiative (IMI) has the objective of stimulating cooperation between rival pharmaceutical laboratories, in an eminently competitive drugs market,”* declared Arthur Higgins, President of the EFPIA (European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations) and Managing Director of Bayer AG’s Bayer Healthcare. *“This marks a break from the status quo, because the “classic business” is not working,”* declared A Higgins. *“We are a highly competitive industry; we must take a step back, however, and realise that we are not making progress and we are not increasing innovation.”* During recent years the number of new medical treatments introduced onto the market has fallen due to the fall in the results of the research laboratories, the increased interest in diseases that are more difficult to treat, and the stricter attitude of the supervisory authorities with regard to approving new drugs. This situation is further complicated by a tougher commercial environment, where insurers have less and less desire to reimburse the new products which only offer, in their opinion, marginal progress in relation to the older and cheaper drugs. The research stimulated by the IMI must concentrate on the discovery of better methods for prediction of the safety and efficacy of new drugs, particularly in fields such as mental disorders, cancer, and inflammatory, metabolic and infectious diseases. *“This approach should also stimulate an increase in private investment in research and development, the sharing of knowledge between the public and private sectors, and the training of scientists,”* declared Higgins.

Following the adoption of the IMI Regulation by the EU Council in December 2007, the first request for proposals was opened on 30 April 2008, jointly with the Research Commissioner, Mr Janez Potočnik. With the IMI, the industry is sending a strong signal to the rest of the world: Europe intends to regain its position of leader in worldwide pharmaceuticals and will devote considerable resources to achieving this ambition. It is now crucial that the companies and all participants in the health sector take part in the research projects, in order to obtain tangible results and meet the expectations of the people.

The results of the first request for proposals, disclosed on 30 April, are expected at the beginning of 2009.

**Reference websites:**

<http://www.IMI-europe.org>

[www.efpia.org](http://www.efpia.org)

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Development (FPRD)**

The “Framework Programmes” (FPs) are the principal financial tools through which the European Union supports research and development initiatives that encompass almost all scientific disciplines. The 7<sup>th</sup> FP has been fully operational since 1 January 2007 and will be completed in 2013. It is based on the accomplishments of its predecessor in order to contribute to the creation of the [European Research Area](#), and to lead towards the development of the economy and the society of knowledge in Europe - Source: [www.cordis.europa.eu](http://www.cordis.europa.eu)

**Experts:**

The Research Commissioner, **Mr Janez Potočnik (biography and photo)**

The president of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and Bayer Healthcare, **Arthur Higgins**



**Janez Potočnik**

**Professional**

2004 - European Commissioner

2002 - 2004 Minister for European Affairs for Slovenia

1998 - 2004 Head of Negotiating Team for the Accession of Slovenia to the EU

2001 - 2002 Minister Councillor at the Slovenian Prime Minister's Cabinet

1993 - 2001 Director at the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development in Ljubljana

1988 - 1993 Senior Researcher at the Institute for Economic Research in Ljubljana

1984 - 1987 Assistant Director at the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development in Ljubljana

**Education**

1993 Ph.D. in Economics, Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana

Janez Potočnik was born on 22 March 1958. He is married and has two sons