

GREECE

“On a par with Malaysia”

► **Athens** –The 5th International Biotechnology Forum (IGBF5), which is to be held May 8-9 in Athens, boasts appearances by three Nobel Prize winners. Andrew Schally, Richard Roberts and Sir Peter Mansfield will speak at the opening ceremony of the two-day-event, which as the website promises “again brings together the crème de la crème of the Bio-Scientific and BioBusiness world.”

Greece might be at the centre of the European biotechnology world for these two days in May, but for the other 363 days of 2009 it will be anything but – at least not yet, according to Nassos Alevizopoulos, a BioBusiness consultant and Senior Vice President of the US biotech company Regulon Inc.

“Despite some recent signs of activity, Greek biotech is embryonic; say at the level of Malaysia,” says Alevizopoulos. Until 2005, he was the CEO of Bionova, the Greek company that hosts IGBF. Today, there are at least 15 R&D-based bio-

tech companies in Greece, he continued, and to increase international outreach in the looming credit crunch, these companies have recently created HellasBio, a non-profit biotech industry association.

As in Italy, the concept of biotech venture capital (BVC) has just begun to emerge in Greece, but “one HellasBio member leads its market in Europe already, while two other innovative Greek biotechs have also attracted professional European BVC for products that were developed locally,” Alevizopoulos says. If all goes well, he hopes to see “50 companies in 5-10 years.” To reach this ambitious goal, the Greek business leader aims to exploit his country’s large expatriate bioscientific community in the US and EU, and take advantage of repatriated scientists and executives. Meanwhile, Malaysia is not idle. At the BioEurope Spring conference in Milan, the flashiest booth belonged to South-East Asia – not South-East Europe. ◀

CYPRUS

Golgi expands marketing

► **Nicosia** – Golgi Pharmaceuticals Ltd is strengthening its collaboration with London-based ReGen Therapeutics. The Cypriot firm will produce and package Colostrinin tablets, and expand distribution to Greece and other Balkan countries. The proline-rich polypeptide complex is derived from mammalian colostrum. The compound and peptides it contains could have potential treating neurodegenerative illnesses such as Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis according to clinical studies conducted in Poland in 2002. In 2008, Cyprus was the first EU state to allow sales of Colostrinin. ◀

ITALY

Unlocking nature’s secrets

► **Milan/Dortmund** – Italian lead-discovery biotech Axxam Spa and Germany-based InterMed Discovery GmbH have announced plans to broaden their collaboration on research and technology, adding that they will refresh their strategic alliance and continue to work on combining proprietary bioinformatics.

Joint research will focus on the mutual discovery and validation of flavour and fragrance functional ingredients, which will then be offered to food, beverage, flavour and fragrance companies. The proprietary compounds that are discovered, say the companies, will have clearly defined activity profiles. ◀

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