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MEETING ABSTRACT

A3.1

European Certified Pharmacologists (EuCP): standards for postgraduate professional training in pharmacology established by EPHAR, the Federation of European Pharmacological Societies

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Background: In many countries world-wide, pharmacologists have raised concerns that pharmacology as a discipline is under threats of disappearing. Departments of pharmacology have been abolished or merged with other units to form larger entities and in many cases not even the former laboratories have retained their distinction as pharmacological units. The new European Certified Pharmacologist (EuCP) scheme of EPHAR, the Federation of European Pharmacological Societies, is intended to provide a distinctly visible documentation which certifies that bearers excel in standards of education, skills, experience and professional standing in pharmacology.

Methods: Draft guidelines were prepared by a dedicated subgroup of EPHAR. In a further two-day workshop, delegates from twenty-one out of the twenty-seven EPHAR member societies discussed and prepared the final guidelines document (www.epharm.org/eucp).

Results: Certification procedures: National EuCP programs will be validated by an international EuCP committee. The national EuCP programs can be based on pre-existing certifications or diplomas or can be set up anew. Diploma programs of an external body (e.g. Medical Chambers or similar) must be validated by the society and checked whether they fulfil all EuCP criteria. Once the national EuCP system is accredited by the EuCP committee, the national societies of pharmacology will be responsible for the evaluation of all documents supplied by individual applicants and upon approval will forward the names of the applicants to the EuCP committee which will issue the EuCP certification (with a period of validity of five years). All certified EuCPs shall re-affirm their certification credentials on a five-year basis by supplying documentation of the continued professional practice and continuing professional development. **Certification requirements:** General requirements include an academic degree (MD, PhD, MSc or equivalent), documentation of training (both theoretical and practical), at least 5 years of pharmacological experience, current professional engagement in pharmacology, active membership in the national society of pharmacology, and a minimum number of professional contributions documented by publications, reports, expert opinions or similar. Training requirements as defined by the EuCP guidelines include fields of theoretical knowledge, practical awareness and practical skills; given the large diversity of the field of pharmacology, these are grouped into compulsory and elective items. **Current status:** As of June 2014, fifteen of the 27 member societies, representing 5,200 of a total of some 10,000 individual members, have already officially approved and adopted the EuCP certification scheme. The project has also already gained recognition by LifeTrain (Wolzt *et al.*: this meeting, [1]), a subproject

of the European Union's Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI).

Discussion: Besides providing common, high standards for professional excellence in pharmacology, the EuCP project shall also provide incentives for European pharmacological societies to develop and set up appropriate training courses for potential EuCP candidates and to implement or provide opportunities for continuing professional development.

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Reference

1. Wolzt M, Hardman M, Brooksbank C, Janko C, Lindén HH: **LifeTrain: towards a European framework for continuing professional development in biomedical sciences.** *Intrinsic Activity*, 2014; 2(Suppl. 1):A3.2.

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