

## **NEOGENIUS, the alliance between Almirall, Esteve, Palau Pharma and Proteomika, is to investigate new medicines for the treatment of osteoarthritis-induced pain**

**This new association of national pharmaceutical companies is a clear example of cooperation between the public and private sectors to foster R&D&I in Spain**

**CENIT provides 7.6 million euros to support a four-year programme with an overall budget of 15.4 million**

**Barcelona, 24 February 2010.-** The NEOGENIUS project is one of 18 research programmes selected to receive a CENIT subsidy, more specifically, the sum of 7.6 million euros. Set up on the basis of a strategic alliance between four pharmaceutical companies (Almirall, Esteve, Palau Pharma and Proteomika), this project will run for four years with a total budget of 15.4 million euros. With the collaboration of a number of SMEs and PROs (Public Research Organisations), a programme will be conducted for the discovery and development of new painkilling medicines for patients suffering from osteoarthritis.

NEOGENIUS PHARMA, A.I.E. (NEOGENIUS) —in which Almirall, Esteve and Palau Pharma each have a 31.12% stake, while Proteomika holds 6.64%— is an innovative experience for Spain in this field, given that four expert companies in the process of drug discovery in general, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) and Cox-2 inhibitors in particular, have come together to conduct a common research programme.

The history of NEOGENIUS as a consortium can be traced back to the GENIUS PHARMA project, a CENIT project approved in the first call for this programme in 2006 in which, as well as Almirall, Esteve and Palau Pharma, the companies Crystax, Enantia and Galchimia also participated. GENIUS PHARMA attained its objective of consolidating different SMEs and PROs in Spain as technological platforms in different pharmaceutical research settings. In fact, NEOGENIUS's external collaborations have been established with platforms from GENIUS PHARMA, which will provide this process with a high degree of inter-regionality and multidisciplinary.

The NEOGENIUS project will leverage this groundwork by integrating and developing it into a research programme comprising two sub-projects: on one hand, the *Pharma* sub-project, which will identify one or more original compounds capable of providing an analgesic effect and improving the quality of life of osteoarthritis sufferers; and, on the other hand, the *Biomarker* sub-project, aimed at identifying biomarkers that will enable a deeper knowledge of this type of patient, and which in the short- to medium-term will facilitate the design of diagnostic tools.

### **CENIT (National Strategic Consortia in Technical Research)**

The CENIT Programme, which is run by the CDTI (Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology -a Spanish public organisation under the Ministry of Science and Innovation), contemplates the funding of large, integrated, industrial research projects of a strategic nature and broad scientific-technical scope, aimed at planned research in prospective technological areas with the potential for international projection. The ultimate aim is to generate fresh knowledge which may be of use in creating new products, processes or services, or for the integration of technologies of strategic interest, thus contributing to a better technological positioning of the Spanish productive network.

## About the participants

**Almirall** is an international pharmaceutical company based on innovation and committed to health. Headquartered in Barcelona, Spain, it researches, develops, manufactures and commercialises its own R&D and licensed drugs with the aim of improving people's health and wellbeing. The therapeutic areas on which Almirall focuses its research resources are related to the treatment of asthma, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis and other dermatological conditions. Almirall's products are currently present in over 70 countries while it has direct presence in Europe and Latin America through 11 affiliates. For further information please visit the website at: [www.almirall.com](http://www.almirall.com)

**Esteve** is a Spanish chemical-pharmaceutical group with a significant international presence. Established in 1929, it currently conducts its activity in the pharmaceutical field, through research into and the development of new drugs, principally in the area of pain relief. It markets an extensive portfolio of prescription medicines, over-the-counter products, vaccines, generic medicines and products for veterinary use. It is also present in the active pharmaceutical ingredients segment, thus offering a global solution in the health sector. Its products are marketed the world over, and it has facilities in Europe, Asia and North America. For further information: [www.esteve.com](http://www.esteve.com)

**Palau Pharma** ("Palau") is a biopharmaceutical company committed to discovering and developing innovative medicines that target the unmet needs of patients suffering from inflammatory and autoimmune diseases, such as asthma, rheumatoid arthritis and ulcerative colitis, and others. Its business strategy consists of developing compounds up to the point of obtaining their proof-of-concept in humans, and then establishing strategic alliances with multinational pharmaceutical companies for their subsequent development and marketing. Palau currently has an extensive portfolio of projects, six of which are in clinical phase, and has forged partnerships with internationally renowned companies, such as GlaxoSmithKline and Schering-Plough. Palau commenced operations in November 2006, as a spin out of the Uriach Group's R&D business unit. Its current investors include Grupo Uriach (majority stakeholder), Caja Duero, Andosins Capital, Caixa Catalunya and Najeti Capital. For further information: [www.palaupharma.com](http://www.palaupharma.com).

**Proteomika is a bio-technological company**, forming part of the Progenika Group. It was established in 2002, with the aim of developing and marketing tools for personalised medicine using proteomic tools. The business objective of Proteomika is the development of systems for non-invasive diagnosis, prognosis and/or prediction or monitoring of the response to pharmacological therapy in human illnesses, as well as the implantation of the products related to or derived from its lines of investigation and associated know-how for clinical pharmacological use.

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