

BBMRI.be

Biobanking and
BioMolecular resources
Research Infrastructure
Belgium

ISSUE 7

New President for BBMRI.be !

From 2019-2021, Laurent Dollé was driving forward BBMRI.be as president of our biobank network. He further developed the structure and activities build out in the first BBMRI.be years. With his previous experience in the BWB, ESBB and BBMRI.be network and his position in many organizations related to the Belgian biobank community, he was able to lift BBMRI.be to the next level of maturity.

The COVID19 pandemic and his career switch to private industry in 2020 did not hamper Laurent to let the BBMRI.be biobanks shine! We could always rely on his insights to move forward with BBMRI.be.



We would like to thank Laurent for all his enthusiasm and all the effort he has put in the development of BBMRI.be. We are looking forward to his further advice as a new member of our Advisory Board and as co-chair of the Sustainability Working Group!

On July 8th 2021, Prof. Elke Smits was officially appointed as the next president of BBMRI.be from 1/09/2021-31/08/2023. We would like to congratulate her with the new position and are looking forward to her views on the further development of BBMRI.be !



Prof. Elke Smits earned her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from the University of Leuven, a Master of Science in Biotechnology and a PhD in Veterinary Sciences in 1998 from the University of Gent. She has gained a very broad expertise in translational research and healthcare innovation, ranging from experience at a biotech company, the Flemish Government and as liaison officer of the Clinical Research Center of both Antwerp University Hospital/ University of Antwerp. She is currently Chief Science and Innovation Officer of UZA in Belgium. She has an outstanding track record in the biobank field on both regional and national level as well as at international level as former President and current Ambassador of ESBB.

News

July 2021

PRESS NEWS:

COVID-research in collaboration with the BBMRI.be biobanks:

- [Rommelink M. et al. Crit Care. 2020 Aug 12;24\(1\):495. doi: 10.1186/s13054-020-03218-5.](#)
- [Van Campenhout C et al, Mol Diagn 2021 Jun 18;S1525-1578\(21\)00168-9.](#)
- [van Dam PA et al. Review Cancer Treat Rev. 2020 Sep;89:102068.](#)
- [van Dam PA et al. Eur J Cancer. 2020 Oct;138:225-227.](#)
- [van Dam et al. Comparative Study Eur J Cancer: 2021 May;148:328-339](#)
- [The COVID-19 Host Genetics Initiative, Andrea Ganna et al. medRxiv 2021.03.10.21252820](#)
- [Cavalier et al. Front Mol Biosci. 2021 Mar 18;8:600881..](#)

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- [3rd BBMRI.QM Newsroom 28 September \(10:00-11:15\) VIRTUAL](#)
- [Knowledge for Growth 27-28-29 September GENT+ VIRTUAL](#)
- [Europe Biobank Week, 8th -10th November VIRTUAL](#)
- [4th BBMRI.QM Newsroom 14 December \(10:00-11:15\) VIRTUAL](#)

New biobank (user) partners

We are very happy to announce three new partners in our BBMRI.be network; one new biobank partner (ITG biobank) and two biobank user partners (Stibion & Plasma Industries Belgium). We would like to welcome our new partners and are looking forward to a fruitful collaboration with all of them!



The ITG Biobank is the biobank of the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp.

The biobank was officially registered in 2018 when the Belgium biobanking law has entered into force.

The ITM is specialized in diagnosis and research of infectious and neglected diseases. The ITM collaborates with (inter)national institutes for research and diagnostics and is home of several (inter)national reference laboratories. The samples of the ITG Biobank are collected over many decades of infectiology research and diagnostics at ITM (travel)-clinic and (inter)national partner institutes.

Samples stored are from human material as well as animal (including insects) and microorganisms.

www.itg.be/biobank@itg.be

The aim of the Stibion biobank foundation is to enable and support research on and development of methods for health monitoring and early detection of disease. The Stibion biobank is building a collection of longitudinal biofluid sample series from people that started donating when healthy and acquired disease during the course of donating. Periodical urine and blood samples are collected in combination with data on health history and current health generated by donor questionnaires. Upon occurrence of a serious disease, medical diagnosis is obtained from associated general practitioners. Currently the Biobank holds approximately 10.000 urine samples and 7.500 blood (plasma) samples of 950 participants in the age of 45 – 75 years. Via broad informed consent participants give permission to make their samples available to other parties when they meet the aim of the biobank.

www.stibion.nl/info@stibion.nl

Plasma Industries Belgium is a clinical stage company active in the plasma protein biotherapeutics industry. The company focuses on the development, production, distribution and service of drugs or semi-finished products based on proteins from blood plasma. Stable plasma derivatives such as clotting factors, immune-globulins and albumin solutions are produced with the fractions isolated by Plasma Industries.

Plasma Industries now processes around 1.8 million liters of plasma for several international partners, which represents approximately 3% of the global human plasma processing. To date, PIBe has enabled the commercialization of more than fifty plasma proteins.

The company is currently exploring new therapeutic areas: the know-how related to fractionation, composition, application and role of plasma proteins will be applied to medical conditions with a high medical need.

www.Plasma-Industries.be

Welcome

New Governance Boards for BBMRI.be

From September 1st 2021, the activities of BBMRI.be will be in the hands of a brand new Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is chaired by the President of BBMRI.be and composed of the Chairs of the working groups, the Scientific Representatives, the representatives of the coordination office, the Past-Presidents and the National Node Director. From September until December 2021, the Board of Directors will prepare the BBMRI.be Action Plan for 2022-2024 that will be presented to you in our next newsletter. We are looking forward to their vision and innovative ideas for BBMRI.be.

Board of Directors members			Advisory Board members
President of BBMRI.be: Elke Smits			
National Node Director: Annelies Debucquoy			
(co)-Chairs of the working groups	Scientific Representatives	Representatives BCR	
IT	Katia Emmerechts <i>Kimberly Vanhees</i>	Paul Delree	Industry
ELSI	Isabelle Huys <i>Pieter Moons</i>	Etienne Marbaix	Marianne Ghyoot (Biowin) Katrien Lorré (FlandersBio) Laurent Dollé (Air Liquide)
Quality	Johan Guns <i>Ahmad Merhi</i> <i>Loes Linsen</i>	Hélène Antoine-Poirel Nadine Ectors	Patients
Stakeholders	Elke Smits <i>Patrick Miqueu</i>	Johan Guns	Veerle Aertsen (EUPATI)
Sustainability	Manon Huizing <i>Laurent Dollé</i>	Elke Smits	SOCs
Networking	Annelies Debucquoy <i>Elke Berneel</i>	Elke Berneel	Sofie Bekaert (VIB)
			Government
			Philippe Desmeth (BELSPO) Michele Oleo (EWI) tbd (SPW-DGO6)
			BBMRI-ERIC
			Jens Habermann (BBMRI-ERIC) Christine Currat (BBMRI.ch)
			ESFRI infrastructures
			Vincent van de Perre (MIRRI) Frederik Coppens (ELIXIR)
			Biobank experts
			Peter In't Veld (UZBrussel) Nadine Ectors (UZLeuven)

For the very first time, BBMRI.be will also have an Advisory Board. The Advisory board is assembled with representatives from different organizations and stakeholders (patient organizations, government, industry, researchers, besides others). and set up to give external advice to the Board of Directors of BBMRI.be. We would like to thank all Advisory Board members for accepting our invitation to be part of this Board and we are very much looking forward to their words of advice!

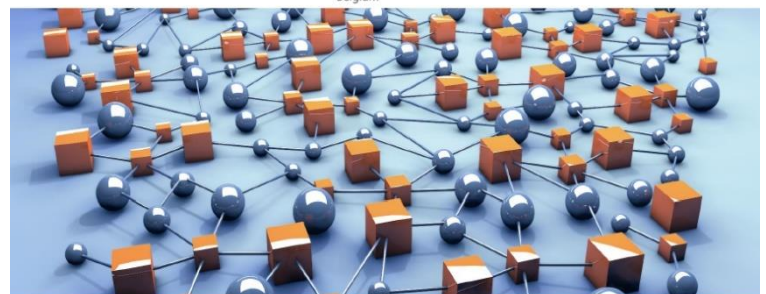
Report annual meeting BBMRI.be

On May 31st 2021, the annual BBMRI.be meeting was organized, for the second time in a virtual setting.

In the morning session, the (co)-chairs of the Working Groups presented the achievements of their Working Group in the last year and their upcoming plans.

After lunch, four BBMRI.be biobanks presented their experiences with the COVID19 pandemic. They showcased the critical role of the rapid response of biobanks at the beginning of the pandemic (collection of samples from COVID19 patients, controls, the setup of new prospective clinical studies, ...) as well as their role in the long-term research related to COVID19 (vaccine studies, ...).

We would like to thank all presenters and all attendees for their contribution to this meeting!



BBMRI.be annual meeting
MAY 31st | 11:00-14:00 | VIRTUAL

FLASH NEWS

Europe Biobank Week 21

From November 8th-November 10th, BBMRI-ERIC and ESBB are co-organizing the Europe Biobank Week 21 (EBW21). Have a look at the [preliminary program](#) and register [here](#). Abstracts can be submitted [until August 1st 2021](#).

Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your biobank activities!



Negotiator 2.0

The BBMRI-ERIC Negotiator is a service that provides an efficient communication platform for biobankers and researchers requesting samples and/or data. The new version of the Negotiator (Negotiator 2.0) allows researchers and biobankers to track the status of the requests. [Find here more information for biobankers and researchers.](#)

To make your collection findable for researchers in the Directory of BBMRI.be and BBMRI-ERIC, you need to be registered in the Negotiator.

Find here the link for the BBMRI.be biobanks to register in the Negotiator: [Link for registration](#)

Launch of new spearhead cluster 'flanders.healthTech'

Flanders.healthTech has been approved as seventh spearheadcluster by the Flemish government. The cluster is a collaboration between more than 70 partners including Flanders.bio, DSP Valley and MedTech Flanders, several companies, R&D partners and (university) hospitals and is being coordinated by VLAIO (Vlaams Agentschap Innoveren & Ondernemen). The cluster will focus in the next ten years on personalized and digitized medicine and care technology.

More information is available [here](#).

Expert Matrix

BBMRI-ERIC's engagement in research and development activities is key and reflected in numerous successful grant applications nationally and internationally. To further strengthen and expand their expertise portfolio, BBMRI-ERIC has developed a survey to collect contact information about all experts in the field. Based on the input received, they will set up topic-specific expert groups and form successful consortia upon call proposals in an accelerated and efficient fashion.

Complete the survey below to become part of BBMRI's Expert circle: [Expert Matrix](#)

BBMRI.be

secretariat.BBMRIbe@kankerregister.org

Belgian Cancer Registry
Koningsstraat 215 box 7
1210 Brussel – Bruxelles

www.bbmri.be
Follow us on [LinkedIn](#)

eliasfreiberger.at