

Cutting-edge research and social-economic issues of precision oncology at the first Visionary Seminar in Heidelberg

Heidelberg, 27.09.2018

On Tuesday September 25, BioRN hosted in Heidelberg the first Visionary Seminar focusing on “Precision Oncology” and attracted around 100 participants to learn and discuss about most recent research advancements and cutting-edge technologies in the field, with a focus on their social-economic impact.

As two major players in the field world-wide, Heidelberg and Leuven, jointly organize the event, in the frame of a long-lasting cooperation in the [Health Axis Europe](#).

In the first session, a stellar line-up of speakers from both clusters reported recent advancement in Precision Oncology in terms of tumour micro environment (Prof. Lambrechts, VIB-KU Leuven Center for Cancer Biology), small molecule development (Dr. Blaukat, Merck), application of precision medicine in pediatric oncology (Prof. Witt, Hopp Children’s Cancer Center at the NCT Heidelberg-KITZ), digital liquid biopsies (Prof. Lagae, Imec) and therapeutic vaccination (Prof. Türeci, BioNTech). The audience was able to witness major advances in the understanding of cancer biology and major breakthroughs in oncology immunotherapy.

The closing panel discussion addressed the need to effectively translate these novel concepts into sustainable and accessible therapeutic options for cancer patients. Prof. Montgomery (President of the German Medical Association), Prof. De Nys (Chair Belgian Commission for the Reimbursement of Medicines), Prof. Delforge (Chairman of the Leuven Cancer Institute), Prof. Schlander (Health Economist at German Cancer Research Center - DKFZ) discussed vividly major obstacles and potential solutions of precision medicine costs. Prioritisation, joint approaches at European level, negotiation of costs, cost-effectiveness calculation and definition of medical needs before drug development are some of the keywords heard during the panel.

Visionary Seminars are well-established in Leuven and zoom in on fast evolutions in health, ICT, biotech, nanotech, materials, food and related domains. The events aim to depict a vision on the state of the art technologies that will start to pay off in the coming generations and where concrete applications are expected within 5, 10 to 15 years.

Based on the success of the first Visionary Seminar, BioRN confirmed its commitment in establishing this format in Heidelberg and surroundings.

BioRN – Life Science Cluster Rhine-Neckar

BioRN is a life science research and industry cluster dedicated to the development of cell-specific, molecular and personalised innovative treatments. The BioRN Cluster stands for the development, networking, representation and promotion of the life science region into one of the leading life science clusters in Europe. The cluster-members include renowned academic research institutions such as the Universities of Heidelberg, the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and global health care companies such as AbbVie, Boehringer Ingelheim, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Roche, und Sanofi-Aventis, and about 80 small and medium-sized biotech enterprises. Beyond the members registered in the cluster, BioRN gives access to a wider network via partnerships and collaborations.

In terms of the use of clusters for the internationalization of companies, BioRN has founded, together with Leuven (Belgium), Maastricht (Netherlands) and Copenhagen (Denmark), an alliance for the enforcement of biomedical innovation in Europe, called the Health Axis Europe.



Closing panel discussion: Prof. De Nys (Chair Belgian Commission for the Reimbursement of Medicines), Prof. Delforge (Chairman of the Leuven Cancer Institute), Prof. Montgomery (President of the German Medical Association), Prof. Schlander (Health Economist at German Cancer Research Center – DKFZ) – from left to right.



Session 1 speakers: Prof. Türeci (BioNTech and Ci3 Cluster), Prof. Lambrechts (VIB-KU Leuven Center for Cancer Biology), Prof. Lagae (Imec), Dr. Blaukat (Merck), Prof. Witt (Hopp Children’s Cancer Center at the NCT Heidelberg- KITZ) – from left to right.