



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**Renewal of the Arrangement between the European Commission and the Office of
Science and Technology Policy of the United States of America establishing a Task Force
on Biotechnology Research**

In its Communication of the SEC(90)1661 final of 6 September 1990, the Commission informed the Council of its intention to sign the abovementioned Arrangement. On 7 September 1990, Vice-President Filippo M. Pandolfi and Dr David Allan Bromley, Assistant to President George H.W. Bush for Science and Technology, signed the document establishing the Task Force for a period of five years. The Arrangement has since been renewed three times, in 1996, 2001 and 2006.

The Arrangement for the Task Force concerns different forms for exchange of information and coordination regarding the scientific aspects of biotechnology research. Through the years this Task Force has played a key role in establishing a diverse range of emerging scientific fields, including systems biology, marine genomics, applications of biotechnology to sustainable energy and synthetic biology. Major societal concerns have also been addressed, such as emerging infectious diseases, nutrition, obesity, biotechnology for cleaning-up pollution, as well as bioethics, the role of women in science and public perception of biotechnology.

In June 2010, the Task Force celebrated its 20th anniversary with the high-level conference "Biotechnology Research for a Complex World", organised under the Spanish Presidency of the EU. A joint publication¹ between the European Commission and the U.S. Government highlights the role of the EU-U.S. Task Force in bringing together researchers from both sides of the Atlantic to anticipate the needs of tomorrow's science today.

The need for transatlantic collaboration in this unique forum in the near future shows no sign of receding, and the activities of the Task Force on Biotechnology Research may become even more important. The strategic plan on what the Task Force wants to deliver over the next five years includes a series of cooperative activities on important scientific fields such as synthetic biology, marine genomics, environmental biotechnology, animal health, sustainable biobased products and plant biotechnology, and bioinformatics.

For these reasons, the Commission intends to renew the Arrangement between the European Commission and the Office of Science and Technology Policy of the United States of America a fourth time.

The Commission will inform the Council and the European Parliament of the effective renewal and of future work carried out under the proposed renewal.

¹ The US-EC Task Force on Biotechnology Research 1990-2010: Biotechnology Research for a Complex World.

ANNEX

IMPLEMENTING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FOR THE EU-U.S. TASK FORCE ON BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH

The Office of Science and Technology Policy of the United States of America and the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as “the Sides”):

Acting in accordance with the Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the European Community, signed in Washington on 5 December 1997, as extended and amended, (hereinafter referred to as “the Agreement”) and

Building on the Administrative Arrangement between the European Commission and the Government of the United States of America, for the EU-U.S. Task Force on Biotechnology Research, signed on September 7, 1990, and renewed in 1996, 2001 and 2006 (hereinafter referred to as “the Arrangement”),

Have reached the following understandings:

Purpose

This Implementing Arrangement is to serve as a renewal of the Arrangement and is to be established as an implementing arrangement under Article 5 of the Agreement. This Implementing Arrangement is intended to be consistent with the provisions of the Agreement.

The purpose of the EU-U.S. Task Force on Biotechnology Research is to increase mutual understanding of EU and U.S. activities and programs related to biotechnology research. In this framework, the Task Force is intended to serve as a mechanism for exchange of information and coordination regarding the scientific aspects of biotechnology and research in other disciplines that supports the development of biotechnology.

Functions

The EU-U.S. Task Force on Biotechnology Research should:

- review research and development programs in the field of biotechnology, and in other related scientific fields;
- facilitate communication and collaboration in biotechnology research;
- plan joint symposia, workshops and other non-confidential information sharing activities on high priority issues of mutual interest regarding biotechnology research;
- study jointly possible activities to inform the public about biotechnology;
- identify and define research needs in order to promote the safe development of biotechnology;

- address specific programmatic and operational scientific issues which affect the development of biotechnology research; and
- provide reviews, analyses, advice, and suggestions to the Biotechnology Steering Committee (BSC) of the European Commission and the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) of the United States.

Structure

The EU component of the EU-U.S. Task Force is to include a Chairperson and representatives of the interested Commission services.

The U.S. component is to include selected members of U.S. Government agencies interested in biotechnology research. Appointments to the U.S. Side, and a Chairperson for the United States, should be made by the Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

The office of Chairperson of the Task Force should alternate annually between the EU and U.S. Chairpersons.

Membership on subcommittees and working groups of the Task Force should not be restricted to permanent representatives to the Task Force, and is to be established as the Chairpersons of each side may deem appropriate.

Task Force activities are to be coordinated by an Executive Secretary for the European Commission and an Executive Secretary for the United States who are to be appointed by the respective Chairpersons. Additional staff assistance, if necessary, should be requested by the Chairpersons from the Directorates General and Agencies represented on the Task Force.

Responsibilities of the Chairpersons

The responsibilities of the Chairpersons are to:

- develop an annual workplan including topics to be discussed, information to be exchanged, and joint activities to be planned;
- hold regular meetings (at least one per year) of the Task Force;
- approve the establishment, continuation or termination of subcommittees, and working groups as necessary to achieve the goals of the annual workplan; and
- prepare a report and present it to the BSC and OSTP at the conclusion of each meeting of the Task Force.

Funding

Each Side should bear the respective costs of its representatives' participation in all meetings and activities of the Task Force.

Other Provisions

The Task Force should not deal with confidential business information, nor should the Task Force undertake activities that generate intellectual property.

Private Sector Interface

At the discretion of the Chairpersons, the Task Force may seek ad hoc advice from various non-governmental individuals. At the request of the Chairpersons, non-governmental individuals may participate in meetings and other activities of the Task Force.

Documentation

Agendas and reports of the Task Force meetings are to be prepared and disseminated by the Executive Secretaries to members of the Task Force and, if authorized by the Chairpersons, to other interested persons upon request. Proceedings of Task Force workshops and scientific meetings are to be made available to the public.

Duration

This Implementing Arrangement is intended to commence upon signature by both Sides. It is to remain operative for as long as the Agreement remains in force or until a Side discontinues its participation in this Arrangement. If a Side intends to discontinue its participation in this Arrangement, it should endeavor to provide 90 days' advance notice of its intent to the other Side.

**FOR THE EUROPEAN
COMMISSION:**

**FOR THE OFFICE OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA:**

Date:

Date: