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divendres 19 d'octubre de 2012

CRG: The Centre for Genomic Regulation celebrates its tenth anniversary with a symposium bringing together prominent figures from the world of research.

News from CRG

Statement by Dr. Luis Serrano, Director of the Centre for Genomic Regulation at the tenth anniversary celebrations of the centre, with the Minister of Economy and Knowledge, Andreu Mas-Colell, and Secretary of State for Research, Carmen Vela.

“In order for science in Spain to survive the crisis it is fundamental to preserve the strongest centres and retain the talent”

- *In a mere ten years, the CRG has become one of the leading research centres in Europe and has contributed to the international recognition of Catalan and Spanish science*
- *In order to continue along this important trajectory and consolidate its position as a leader in biomedicine, the centre will strengthen its strategic alliances with institutions and companies*
- *Nobel prizewinner in chemistry, Ada Yonath, and Albert Lasker award winners, Randy Sheckman and Tom Maniatis, are to join the event in recognition of the trajectory of the organisation. Visit the symposium website at www.2012symposium.crg.es*

The economic crisis could mean the regression of Spanish science to its beginnings if we do not work to maintain the international centres of reference we currently have and if we fail to retain the scientific talent. This was affirmed by **Dr. Luis Serrano**, director of the CRG and one of the most important researchers on a Spanish and international level, in the symposium that the centre is holding to mark its tenth anniversary.

Aware of the problems facing the administration, **Dr. Serrano** emphasized the need to unite the efforts of all stakeholders. “Science is more present today than ever before and, in biomedicine, the ability to find answers has increased dramatically over the last 30 years. Being at the forefront of this world requires an effort from everyone. Sharing knowledge, working together, innovation and risk is the only way to maintain and strengthen our position and secure a place among the best”.

Dr. Serrano drew a parallel between the important achievements of Spanish science over the last ten years and the Arab Spring, “a period of revolution, creation, innovation, commitment to research and talent ... if we don’t take advantage of and preserve that which we have achieved so far, the economic crisis and lack of funding could mean the loss of important research centres and scientific talent and, therefore, a regression in no time at all, to where we were ten years ago.”

During the ceremony held this morning, the Minister of Economy and Knowledge of the Catalan Government, **Andreu Mas-Colell**, stated that “we

pledged to support a model of science in Catalonia in response to a vision of the future that has become a reality in centres like the CRG". The Minister also highlighted the potential of the centre "to conduct research of high quality and international impact."

For her part, the Secretary of State for Research, **Carmen Vela**, said the CRG is "a clear example of success with regard to collaboration between central and regional governments, public organisations and universities, leading to an international centre like the CRG, with excellent science. Such centres are the future of science."

Regarding the current situation, she declared that "we are in an extremely difficult position that has forced us to reduce funding for research, but we are working very hard to preserve the current level of excellence in science and to overcome this situation." She also reminded us of the 47 million euro investment by the government in 200 CRG projects to create awareness, educate and attract scientific talent as well as to benefit society.

The CRG has become one of the most prestigious and competitive public scientific research centres, being among the top twenty in the world¹ making important contributions to the scientific community (the latest example is its role in the ENCODE project, the second phase of investigation into the human genome, the CRG being the Spanish centre with the most researchers participating in the project, with a total of 20, alongside more than 400 scientists from the top research centres in the world, from California, the East Coast of the U.S., the UK, Switzerland, Singapore and Japan), and also to society, transferring knowledge in the form of patents, licenses and outreach activities in order to generate tangible benefits for the general public and the economy).

The CRG is one of the world leaders in biomedical research, positioned 16th out of more than 3,000 institutions in the world and taking 5th spot in the European ranking of health research centres in 2011¹. This is reflected by the high number of papers produced by scientists at the CRG, which in 2011 reached a new milestone with the publication of 195 papers in international journals, and 118 seminars being given involving top level speakers.

The Symposium that starts today and continues until tomorrow is also a fantastic opportunity to see the latest and most important research. The meeting will include the participation of globally renowned figures in biomedicine such as Ada Yonath, Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry in 2009, and Randy Sheckman and Tom Maniatis, awarded the Albert Lasker Award in 2002 and 2012 respectively, as well as leading researchers from world class institutions such as the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Biology and Genetics, in Germany, and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL).

The CRG plans to organise activities and events to celebrate its tenth

anniversary, focusing on those elements that have made its current position as a world leader in biomedicine possible: scientific excellence, international cooperation and transfer of knowledge to society

New challenges to strengthen the position as a reference in biomedicine

Looking ahead to the next decade, the CRG wants to take an important step “and become the centre of reference for genetic and rare diseases, boosting partnership agreements with other national and international institutions, and also facilitating funding through private patronage, something already very common in the U.S. and which expands the range of funding sources”, explains Luis Serrano.

The aim is for the knowledge generated in the CRG to be transformed into tangible benefits for the health of the general public and for the economy. The goal is to “remove the barriers between the groups more focused on basic research -generally public- and those more oriented towards the development of new drugs and technologies -mainly private- to enable knowledge to be shared and a model of networked R+D excellence to be created.”

Another tenet of the CRG is to “communicate scientific progress to society and establish a bilateral dialogue, being receptive to its demands, and training the next generation of researchers, from the youngest, through activities for schools, to established scientists, to enable them to consolidate their careers.”

The Centre for Genomic Regulation in figures

- An integrated team of 416 professionals
- 98 PhD students (81% from abroad) and 99 postdoctoral researchers (70% from abroad)
- 35 different nationalities
- 7.500 m2 distributed over floors 4, 5 and 6 of the PRBB
- 6 research programmes comprising 30 independent groups
- 6 scientific and technical services with cutting edge equipment providing service to CRG researchers and more than 40 external clients (universities, research centres and companies)
- 195 scientific articles published in international scientific journals in 2011
- Participation in more than 50 international R+D projects
- More than 16.9 million Euros of external funding in 2011
- The number one research centre in Spain with the most European Commission 7th Framework Programme (FP7) projects, after the large institutions (national institutes and universities)

References

1. 2011 SCIMAGO report - Institutions Ranking World Report, which assesses

more than 3000 organisations.

2. The CRG European Research Centre ERC grant list: Starting Grants: 1.5 million Euros for 5 years:

2007: Ben Lehner, Mark Isalan (Systems Biology Programme) and Hernán López-Schier (currently at Helmholtz Zentrum München).

2009: Pia Cosma

2010: Manuel Mendoza

2012: Salvador Aznar, Pedro Carvalho , Toni Gabaldón, Gian Tartaglia

Advanced Grants: 2.5 million Euros for 5 years:

2008: Luis Serrano

2010: Vivek Malhotra

2011: Roderic Guigó

3. CRG researchers who are members of EMBO: Miguel Beato, María Pia Cosma, Thomas Graf, Vivek Malhotra, Luis Serrano, Juan Valcárcel and Isabelle Vernos (she's also a member of the scientific council of the European Research Council (ERC))

4. Large international programmes coordinated by the CRG SystemTb (in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the U.S.), FLiACT (including participation of Janelia Farm Research Campus, U.S.), BioPreDyn, 4DCellFate and GEUVADIS.

Pictures:

Download them at: <ftp://lcendros:laia2012@perelman.crg.es/CRG10Anniversary>

Footnotes:

Pic : CRGXAnniversary_2_DSC0011:

- Andreu Mas Colell
- Carmen Vela
- Luis Serrano
- Jose García Montalvo
- Antoni Castella, Secretary for University and Research under the Ministry of Economy and Knowledge of the Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Jordi Camí, Director of the Barcelona Biomedical Research Park PRBB

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