

## Summary of the 1st ERT Workshop

On November 8, 2012, the Swedish Society of Toxicology in collaboration with the EUROTOX Subcommittees for Registration and Education held the first international workshop on European Registered Toxicologists (ERT) at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden.

The theme for this workshop was “new national registers”, and the program covered several presentations of the ERT concept, the current status, as well as how ERT can be managed on a national level. In different outbreak groups, ERT was discussed in relation to the authorities, the private sector, education, and ERT management. Participants came from ten countries (both with and without national registers) and represented academia, authorities, and the private sector.

### Welcome note and introduction

Mattias Öberg, Chairman of the Swedish Society of Toxicology welcomed all participants and presented the workshop program. Helen Håkansson, former member of the EUROTOX Education Subcommittee, explained the purpose of the meeting and acknowledged the process within EUROTOX that has facilitated the possibility to hold a series of workshops associated with the recent revision of the ERT Guidelines in order to promote that more national registers are established (1st ERT workshop), that training quality and requirements are harmonized (2nd ERT workshop) and that the professional recognition is strengthened and further tailored to meet societal needs (3rd ERT workshop).

### Brief summaries of the presentations:

Current position of the ERT system & ERT worldwide: The first presentation by Prof Jyrki Liesivuori, member of the EUROTOX Registration Subcommittee, covered the basics of the registration procedure, some numerical facts, and notes from earlier IUTOX and EUROTOX meetings where ERT was discussed. The need for recognition and credibility of ERT was specifically pointed out. Worldwide, EUROTOX has been invited to participate in the IUTOX initiative for global harmonization of existing registration and certification of toxicologists.

ERT guidelines for registration: Prof Rolf Schulte-Hermann, former member of the EUROTOX Education Subcommittee, presented the basic requirements for ERT candidates, along with the 2-step model for registration according to the EUROTOX model. While the guidelines for registration are not obligatory, a key purpose is to promote harmonization of quality standards and registration procedures of national societies. Therefore, the principal common standards should be used by societies as far as possible. The key themes (requirements on candidates, contents of education and training, administration) were presented in detail. It was suggested that the new guidelines for registration will promote collaboration among national societies and promote exchange and cooperation of EUROTOX with national societies and others involved in the process.

EUROTOX education: Prof Emanuela Corsini, member of the EUROTOX Education Subcommittee, summarized the work of this Subcommittee with a focus on the basic and advanced toxicology

courses (BTC & ATC), which have been run in several central and eastern European countries over the last years. Course contents and the very positive feedback from attendants were presented. It was noted that EUROTOX fellowships for attendance to ERT courses and cross-border exchange of teachers can be applied for until January 20, 2013.

ERT training programs: Prof Martin Wilks, member of the EUROTOX Education Subcommittee, presented the recently conducted survey of training programs under the ERT scheme, which shows that most national registers accredit educational courses for the purpose of registration. Obstacles to participation in different programs consist of variable course contents, credit transfer issues and language barriers.

Examples from national registries: The management structure and procedures for the Finnish and Swiss Registers were presented by Tuula Heinonen, Finland, and Martin Wilks, Switzerland. They also shared their experiences from both the management and registrant perspectives. The Finnish presentation is enclosed, while information on the Swiss ERT can be found at <http://www.swisstox.ch/swisstox-en/Schweizerisches-Berufsregister-fuer-Toxikologie.php> . Further information was provided from the Dutch and Norwegian registers by Charles Bodar and Anna Mehl, respectively.

#### **Brief summary of the group discussions:**

ERT should be an objective quality mark, useful in e.g. hiring situations. Its existence could also improve the status of the national toxicology organizations. Criteria must be harmonized between countries, and the quality must be consistently high. There are some risks with the requirements for personal recommendation. Promoting the ERT concept, both to stakeholders and among toxicologists, is important.

Certification renewal will encourage employers and toxicologists to prioritize professional development. There may be issues when agreeing upon requirements for renewal.

With regards to both ERT education and to ERT system management, different forms of collaboration between countries were suggested. Courses should be held in English and harmonized between countries, in order to enable cross-border participation. Experiences from managing a national ERT system were shared, as were suggestions on pragmatic and transparent approaches when starting out as a new ERT country.

#### **Overall conclusions:**

Mattias Öberg concluded that the outcome of this first ERT workshop was very fruitful both from a European and national perspective. Based on knowledge, contacts, and perspectives achieved during the day, the Swedish Society of Toxicology is now ready to in detail describe how a Swedish national register might be organized. It was suggested to work on this issue in close collaboration with the national societies from Finland, Norway and Denmark, which were all represented at the workshop.

**List of enclosed documents:**

Program and list of participants; 1<sup>st</sup> international WS ERT program\_participants.pdf

ERT guidelines for registration 2012

Prof Jyrki Liesivuori: ERT current status J Liesivuori 121108.pdf, ERT world wide J Liesivuori 121108.pdf

Prof Rolf Schulte-Hermann: ERT Guidelines dev R Schulte-Hermann 121108.pdf

Prof Emanuela Corsini: Eurotox Education E Corsini 121108.pdf

Prof Martin Wilks: ERT training programs 121108.pdf

Tuula Heinonen: ERT Finland T Heinonen 121108.pdf

Output from the group discussions: 1<sup>st</sup> ERT Workshop group discussion notes 121108.pdf