

e u r o p e a n CONNEXTION

THE NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE EU HITACHI SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM

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Connexion meets: Dr. David J Bennett

Dr David J Bennett will be one of the moderators at the forthcoming EU Hitachi Science & Technology Forum. He has a PhD in biochemical genetics and an MA in science policy studies, with long term interests in the relations between science, industry, government, education, law, the public and the media. He has worked in universities and industry in the UK, USA, and Australia and is now in the Netherlands. A member of numerous national and international organisations and committees in biotechnology, he works for the European Federation of Biotechnology (EFB) and the European Commission. Especially in relation to this Forum, he is Secretary of the EFB Task Group on Public Perceptions of Biotechnology and its Section on Education in Biotechnology.

Connexion: *Could you give us a brief overview of Life Sciences in Europe?*

Dr. Bennett : "Life Sciences are one of the most rapidly developing areas of science and technology and one with major impact on the every-day lives of people and societies. This has now begun with the introduction of new pharmaceutical products such as vaccines and diagnostics and new crop varieties and foods made with the use of genetic modification. While healthcare applications are generally welcome, and very much sought by sufferers of many diseases, especially of genetic disabilities, HIV, malaria, etc., applications in agriculture and food production raise widespread concerns about human and environmental safety and ethical considerations. These have been taken up by activist groups and the media, both with their own interests and agendas, leading to delays in the approval of genetically modified food products and their introduction to the market in Europe. This has resulted in the withdrawal from sale of already-marketed products containing genetically modified ingredients together with the holding back of many new products from the market. Yet it is crucial that Europe maintains its competitive position in the undoubted global development of these technologies. Otherwise it will lose the employment opportunities and economic returns (which sustain its social systems) from them, together with the investment in research and development already made, and again become largely an importer of the technologies and products, as has already happened with other areas of technology. For Europe, it is a case of "use it or lose it." "

Connexion: *What do you think about the Forum programme?*

Dr. Bennett: "The EU Hitachi Science and Technology Forum takes an expert look at life sciences in European society, today and for the future. It will be introduced by speakers who are among the people with the greatest experience in the world of life sciences policy, followed by top level scientists and industrialists giving state-of-the art accounts of four main areas of life sciences: healthcare, agricultural and food applications, and in relation to the environment. Debate about their impact on European society will be initiated by a distinguished science journalist. Forum members will then have the opportunity to discuss what

Editorial note



"We are moving towards the 4th EU Hitachi Science & Technology Forum, that will be held in Brussels on 18,19 & 20 May, 2001.

This year we will address " Life Sciences and their impact on the European Society". You will receive soon more information with practical details.

In this issue, Dr. David J Bennett, from the European Federation of Biotechnology, gives us interesting ideas on the importance of Life Sciences in Europe.

Life Sciences best experts will join you in Brussels to share their views and feed the debate (see Forum speakers). Following your requests after the Dublin meeting, you will have the opportunity to share your ideas with all participants in small discussion groups.

I would like to thank the Working Group members for their excellent job in the preparation of the Forum, and I welcome the Forum Fellows, who will definitely contribute to enrich discussions.

We look forward to seeing all of you in Brussels, and I encourage your active participation.

Norikiyo Koide
General Manager,
Hitachi Corporate Office, Europe

they see as the main issues in smaller groups led by three very experienced and interesting ethicists who came to the field by quite different routes. These discussions will then be brought to the full Forum by their rapporteurs and leaders for further discussion to round off the debate. This will undoubtedly lead to exciting discussions!

Forum speakers

Hitachi Brussels office has contacted several outstanding experts to invite them to participate to the Forum. They are top specialists of Life Sciences.

Dr David Bennett (see above)

Mr Mark Cantley, Special Advisor, Research Directorate-General, European Commission, with vast

knowledge of biotechnology in its global context, from 1984-92 Head of the European Commission's Concertation Unit for Biotechnology, then head of the OECD's Biotechnology Unit to 1999 when he returned to the European Commission.

Dr Bernard Dixon, OBE, distinguished science writer, journalist and regular columnist in the British Medical Journal, Nature Biotechnology, etc. From 1969-79 he was editor of New Scientist and previously deputy editor of World Medicine. His books include "Magnificent Microbes", "Beyond the Magic Bullet", "Health and the Human Body" and "Power Unseen - How Microbes Rule the World".

Mr Willy de Greef, Head of Regulatory Affairs, Sygenta, Basel with extensive experience in Central

Africa and previously in a leading biotechnology company, Plant Genetic Systems. He supervised the first GM crop field trial in Europe.

Dr. Shojiro Asai, President of the Research & Development Group, Hitachi, Ltd., supervises all R&D activities at Hitachi, Ltd. From 1996 to 1999, he was also Advisory Council Member at Stanford University.

Dr. Takao Iwayanagi, Chief Technology Officer of the Life Science Group, Hitachi, Ltd., serves as the coordinator and person accountable for technical affairs in the Life Science Group.

More speakers will join us.

Reminder Forum Members

Visit the EU Institutions with Hitachi !

In the last Connexion issue (December 2000), we invited you to join us for a special tour visiting the European Institutions on Friday May 18, 2001. The visit will start from 11:00 am through to app. 5:00 pm. So far, we have received only 5 responses. A minimum of 15 is required. *Come on!*

To participate to the visit, please contact Grégoire Poisson, Tel : +32 2 643 48 88, Email: poisson@cm.px.head.hitachi.co.jp.

Let's welcome the Forum Fellows !

Enriching the debate, diversifying the expertise, stimulating the audience's participation....have been the main suggestions and remarks made by Forum Members that we received through discussions, emails or letters.

From this year, Forum Members will thus receive the support of experts who have a keen interest in European societal issues, who are interested in contributing to the overall success of the Forum. They will have a strong personal commitment both during plenary sessions and preparatory meetings together with Forum working group members. These individuals will be known as Forum Fellows. The group will be chaired Dr. Shojiro Asai, President of the Research & Development Group of Hitachi, Ltd.

3 experts have kindly accepted to become Forum Fellows:

Mr. Robert Verrue, Director General, Directorate-General Information Society, European Commission, Brussels

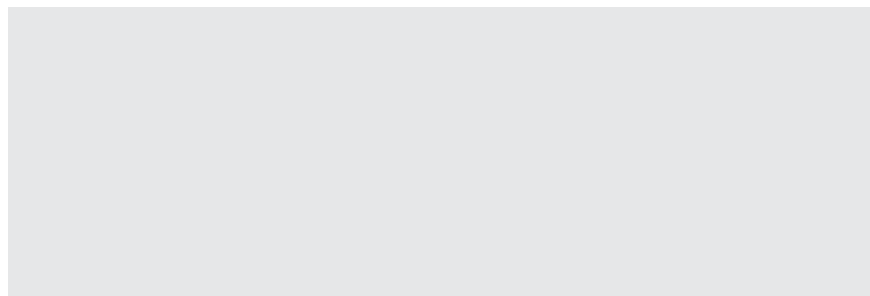
Mr. Florian Schmitz, Rechtsanwalt, Clifford Chance Pünder, Frankfurt

Mr. Pierre Longin, President, Longin & Associés, Brussels

Connexion is very pleased to welcome them !

To the Working Group: Arigato!

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Working Group members 2000/2001 who, under the chairmanship of Dr. Volker Braun, made an excellent job in designing the programme of the May 2001 Forum. Representing their Forum Members colleagues, they strove to prepare an exciting debate for their fellows, i.e. you. The active involvement of Working Group Members greatly supports the momentum of your Forum and we encourage other Forum Members to join Working Groups in the Future!



Many thanks to the Working Group Members!

Hans Heinrich Angermann, Volker Braun (chairman), Laurent Cadet, Etienne Dancer, Jim Greer, Albert Heberle, Philippe Robert and Laure Van Schendel.

European Connexion is published by Noriaki Koide and edited by Grégoire Poisson. The Hitachi Corporate Office, Europe welcomes and encourages your comments and ideas.

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