

PRESS RELEASE

“Work meeting with the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos on the progress of the Athens Comprehensive Cancer Research Centre”

Friday 10th August 2018



ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
National Hellenic Research Foundation



GERMAN
CANCER RESEARCH CENTER
IN THE HELMHOLTZ ASSOCIATION

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GRAND CHALLENGES

A delegation of the German Research Center (DFKZ) and of the Helmholtz Association visited the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos on Friday July 27 2018, following his invitation to be updated about the progress of the Athens Comprehensive Cancer Research Center (ACCC). The Athens Comprehensive Research Centre is under the auspices of H.E. the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos, initiated by the NHRF and implemented in collaboration with the DFKZ and the Helmholtz Association, the largest research organization in the EU. On behalf of the Helmholtz Association the work meeting was attended by Prof. Dr. Otmar Wiestler, President, and Dr. Effrosyni Chelioti, Head of Communication and External Affairs. DFKZ was represented by Prof. Dr. Michael Baumann, Scientific Director; Prof. Dr. Joseph Puchta, Administrative Director and Prof. Dr. Antonia Dimitrakopoulou Strauss, DFKZ Coordinator of the ACCC. The Greek side was represented by Dr. Vasilis Gregoriou, Director and Chairman of the Board at the National Hellenic Research Foundation and Administrative Director of ACCC and Dr. Alexandros Pintzas, Director of the Institute of Biology, Medical Chemistry and Biotechnology. Mr. Jens Plotner, the German Ambassador to Greece, honored the meeting with his presence.

"Both cancer research and cancer medicine are among the grand challenges we face today and they are intimately linked," said Prof. Dr. Otmar Wiestler, President of the Helmholtz Association. "The Athens Comprehensive Cancer Center (ACCC) represents a

pioneering new institution in Greece. After the start of our unique cooperation last December we will now bring together the best researchers of the partner institutions from Germany and Greece to discuss key questions at a top research and clinical level. To manage the challenge of translational cancer research we need to go ahead with a joint strategy. I am very confident that we will master the tasks ahead of us and can also make an important contribution to the European Research Area.”

“Research is an essential part of a Comprehensive Cancer Center and our commitment at the ACCC is focused primarily on science”, said Prof. Dr. Michael Baumann, DKFZ Scientific Director. “We will, therefore, launch research projects where DKFZ researchers work collaboratively with Greek colleagues. In addition, we will invest in the joint training of young researchers and clinician scientists. Our main goal is to make a decisive contribution to improving health care for the Greek population.”

“The interaction with the Greek colleagues started one year ago. Now we established working groups identifying young scientists from Greece. Working together with the Greek colleagues is a real pleasure and I am happy to have the Chairman of the National Hellenic Research Foundation. Dr. Vasilis Gregoriou, as a strong and experienced counterpart at my side”, said Prof. Josef Puchta, Administrative Director of the DKFZ.

“We are very honored by the invitation of his excellence, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos, to visit him and update him on the progress with ACCC so far. We are also very pleased to see the first phase of the Greek-German collaboration to start being implemented. We are looking forward to a rapid expansion phase that will make a significant progress in cancer research and ultimately cancer care in the city of Athens and in Greece in general.” said Dr. Vasilis Gregoriou, President of the NHRF and Administrative Director of ACCC.

The Athens Comprehensive Cancer Center (ACCC) is the first Comprehensive Cancer Center in Greece. The variety of therapeutic modalities and the complexity of treatment options in patients with advanced tumors require a multidisciplinary approach if the optimal therapeutic strategy for each patient is to be developed. The main objective of the ACCC is to enhance interdisciplinary cancer research and especially to improve the lives of patients with these multifactorial, heterogeneous diseases. ACCC aims to contribute novel treatment methods to knowledge transfer in public hospitals in connection with innovative detection technologies for diagnostic and prognostic disease indicators. Today it is estimated that about 50% of Greek national hospital capacity is located in the center of Athens, often in direct communication with research centers and



specialized university departments. Synergies and services with large health care units in the Athens area and the Attica region in general can also be exploited.

In the course of the introduction of the Helmholtz European Partnering Program, the Greek National Hellenic Research Foundation (NHRF) together with the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and its translation center, the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT), have succeeded in acquiring funding as a pilot project to lay the foundations for the ACCC.

Joint innovative oncological research projects by scientists from various Athens clinics and institutes, and scientists from the German Cancer Research Center and National Center for Tumor Diseases form the core of the collaboration. Funds from the Helmholtz Association and the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) allow five joint projects in the fields of data integration, biobanking and 'omics' technology, colorectal cancer, multiple myeloma, pediatric oncology and small animal imaging. The first ACCC fellows started already their scientific work and the first oncological tumor samples have been delivered from Athens to the DKFZ for omics analysis while the first also patients have been included into European clinical trials.

The second phase involves the establishment of structures for translational and clinical research, such as a center for clinical studies, a national cancer register, a center for tumor data documentation and various biobanks. Furthermore, molecular tumor boards for advanced diseases and training platforms will be established. ACCC will also pave the way for the participation in European initiatives (e.g. DKTK, Cancer Core Europe, BBMRI-ERIC).



Greeting of the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos with Prof. Dr. Wiestler, President of the Helmholtz Association.



Greeting of the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos with the German Ambassador Mr. Plotner.



Greeting of the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos with Prof. Dr. Puchta, Administrative Director of the DFKZ.



Greeting of the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos with Prof. Dr. Baumann, Scientific Director of the DFKZ.



Greeting of the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos with Dr. Gregoriou, President of the NHRF.



Dr. Gregoriou, President of the NHRF; Prof. Dr. Dimitrakopoulou-Strauss, ACCC coordinator on behalf of the DFKZ; Dr. Pintzas, Director of the Institute of Biology, Medical Chemistry and Biotechnology.



The President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Pavlopoulos with the German Delegation of the DFKZ and the Helmholtz Association; Mr. Plotner; Dr. Gregoriou and Dr. Pintzas on behalf of the NHRF.



Work meeting on the progress of the Athens Comprehensive Cancer Center.