

BY FLORIAN DEMUTH

# ESR and partners put medical radiation protection onto Europe's research agenda

An important part of EuroSafe Imaging's mission is to promote research in medical radiation protection and contribute to shaping the European research agenda. The European Society of Radiology (ESR) recently achieved a milestone in this regard by becoming a member of the Multidisciplinary European Low-Dose Initiative (MELODI), an organisation promoting radiation protection research.

Previously, the cooperation with MELODI had been governed by a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2014, but the ESR's acceptance as a MELODI member by its General Assembly on November 9, 2015 allows the ESR to become an integral, long-term partner in shaping the European radiation protection landscape. Prof. Guy Frija, member of the ESR Radiation Protection Subcommittee, was elected as a member to the MELODI board to represent the interests of the medical community.

Throughout 2015, the ESR and other medical associations – the European Federation of Radiographer Societies (EFRS), the European Federation of Organisations in Medical Physics (EFOMP), the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM), and the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) – have been working to develop a strategic research agenda (SRA) for medical radiation protection, as this field has been underrepresented and fragmented to date. In

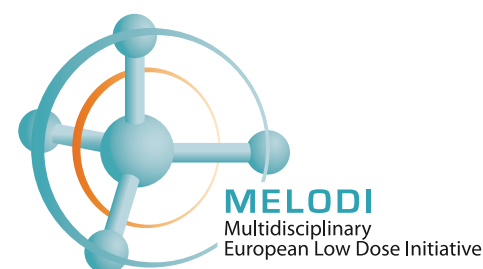
addition to giving greater visibility to medical radiation protection in the research community, the aim is to also influence the EU research programme Horizon 2020 by proposing research priorities within its area of expertise.

The first version of the SRA for medical radiation protection has been reviewed and approved by all medical societies involved. The final draft version, which will be circulated soon, will be the first time that the medical community has reached a consensus on a joint approach. This unity will help to ensure greater visibility in radiation protection research and opportunities for funding in future research programmes, which represents a major success for the medical community.

The logical next step following the finalisation of the SRA is the establishment of an independent medical platform, modelled after existing research platforms such as MELODI or European Radiation Dosimetry Group (EURADOS). To that end a steering committee was set up,

consisting of representatives of the five medical associations, to prepare a draft concept for consideration by the boards of the associations. There may be an opportunity for EIBIR, the ESR's European Institute for Biomedical Imaging Research, to provide management services to a future platform. The aim of this endeavour is to have more visibility and collaboration with the nuclear sector, to keep the SRA for medical radiation protection updated, and to ensure medical radiation protection research remains on the EU's research agenda.

The European Commission published the Horizon 2020 call 'NFRP9 – Impacts of low-dose radiation exposure' which comes at a very opportune moment for the intensifying cooperation between the medical societies, as several topics from the SRA have found their way into the call. The aim of this call is to gain better understanding of the effects of low-dose ionising radiation on human health, to reinforce cooperation between the medical



and nuclear sectors, and to develop science-based recommendations to decision-makers and practitioners.

The deadline for the call, providing funding of 8 to 10 million euros (with only one project likely to be accepted), is October 5, 2016. The call contains topics lobbied for by the ESR, such as a coding system for medical imaging, a repository for dosimetry data, and biobanking infrastructure. It is expected that bidding for NFRP9 will be highly competitive, which is why the ESR has taken the initiative and suggested the five medical societies

join forces and submit a single application under EIBIR's management.

2015 was a very encouraging year for medical radiation protection research as the medical community came together, joined forces with the influential MELODI platform, and agreed on a joint strategic approach. Having laid the groundwork, all involved stakeholders now have to build on this foundation and continue to intensify their cooperation to reap the benefits and take medical radiation protection research to the next level.



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**Imaging in Vascular Diseases**  
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**Hybrid Imaging**  
September 1-2, Vienna/Austria

**Advanced Oncologic Imaging**  
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**Imaging Hallmarks of Cancer**  
October 28-29, Lisbon/Portugal

**Multidisciplinary Approach to Cancer Imaging**  
November 10-12, Amsterdam/The Netherlands

**Body Imaging Biomarkers**  
December 12-13, Valencia/Spain



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