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ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM SIGNS MOU WITH UNIVERSIDAD DEL ROSARIO IN COLOMBIA TO EXPLORE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

Rotterdam (Netherlands): August 11, 2009 — Erasmus University Rotterdam's Erasmus MC University Medical Center announced today it signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Universidad del Rosario's Medical and Health Sciences School in Bogota, Colombia. The agreement comes in the wake of the announcement of Colombia's doctoral programme "Bicentennial Generation", led by Colciencias, the Department for Science, Technology, and Innovation, which aims to enhance the academic excellence of the people of Colombia by developing a new generation of researchers with highest academic degrees. The MoU also benefits students and professionals from countries outside of Colombia seeking a career in the health sciences in Colombia or other regions in Latin America.



From left:

Drs. Ton van der Pijl, Bestuursdienst Erasmus University Rotterdam

Drs. Hanneke Teekens, Communications Director, The Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education – Nuffic

Dr. Mónica Ortegón, Dept. of Research and Epidemiology – Universidad del Rosario

His Excellency Ambassador Lloreda

Dr. Carlos Restrepo, Director MSc programme in Genetics – Universidad del Rosario

Prof. Hans Büller, Chairman Erasmus MC Board of Directors

Prof. Henk Schmidt (standing), representing the Rector Magnificus of Erasmus University Rotterdam

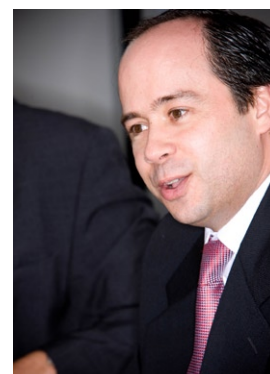
Prof. Albert Hofman, NIHES Scientific Director

Dr. Carlos Trillos, Director MSc programme in Epidemiology – Universidad del Rosario

Ambassador Lloreda said:

"Colombia's doctoral programme "Bicentennial Generation" is an outstanding effort to develop a new generation of researchers and the cooperation agreement between the Erasmus University Rotterdam and the School of Medicine of the Universidad del Rosario will contribute highly to this purpose, becoming an example to follow in a world in which educational institutions should follow the call of globalization".

The MoU harmonizes Colombia's USD 160 million earmarked programme "Generacion del Bicentenario", announced on June 11, which aims to create 4.460 new researchers with a doctoral degree in science, technology, and innovation by 2019 (500 each year). On June 12, Colciencias launched the first calls for postgraduate doctorate training abroad and in Colombia, and training of young professionals and innovators. In the framework of Colombia's Bicentennial Generation programme, the development of research in the health sciences is one of the strategic priorities for the country. The other priority areas are biodiversity, hydrology, electronics, and social studies.



Under the auspices of Colciencias, the programme provides full scholarships, such as the "Francisco Jose de Caldas" grants for doctoral studies at the best universities in Colombia and abroad during a period of five years. In addition to the Caldas grants, Colciencias has agreed with Colfuturo, an organization sponsoring postgraduate studies for Colombian citizens, to increase the number of doctoral grants with another 200 as of 2013. Other partners of the Bicentennial programme are the German DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), the Fulbright Commission in de United States, LASPAU (Academic and Professional Programs for the Americas), and ICETEX (Instituto Colombiano de Credito Educativo y Estudios Tecnicos en el Exterior) in Colombia.

*Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands) signs MoU with
Universidad del Rosario (Colombia) on 11 August 2009*

Erasmus University's Erasmus MC University Medical Center and Universidad del Rosario's Medical and Health Sciences School have agreed on developing an academic, scientific and cultural co-operation. The two academic units will explore educational and scientific co-operative activities in the area of health sciences. The areas of cooperation are open to programmes offered at either academic unit as felt desirable and feasible, and that are deemed to contribute to the fostering and development of the cooperative relationship between the two Academic Units.

Dr Leonardo Palacios, dean of the Medical and Health Sciences School, Universidad del Rosario, Colombia, said:

"The Medical and Health Sciences School of Universidad del Rosario is pleased with the launching of the Bicentennial Generation programme fostered by Colciencias.

As trainers of medical doctors since 1677, and of other health professionals for more than 40 years, and concurrent with the recent opening of our Doctoral programme in Biomedical Sciences, we celebrate and join this important initiative set by Colciencias.

The agreement with Erasmus University will allow us to move in the direction pointed out by the Bicentennial programme, strengthening research in the health sciences and doctoral education in our country".

Collaboration will entail academic exchanges and cooperative research, through activities or programmes relating to the exchange of students for non-degree and/or degree seeking study stays; joint research activities, and exchange of academic materials and other information. Other activities to be further explored include the exchange of faculty members, the participation in seminars and academic meetings, special short-term academic programs, and professional development programmes.

Prof. Albert Hofman, Scientific Director, Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences, said:

"As we enter a new era of scientific discoveries, NIHES is constantly looking for opportunities to enhance its network of partner universities worldwide. Joining our knowledge and expertise with Universidad del Rosario will enable all those aspired to become an academic, or a scientist, whether in the public sector or in industry, in Latin America or in Europe, to benefit from the best educational resources in both worlds. The EU funded Erasmus Mundus II programme represents a great opportunity to enable partnerships between EU and non-European higher education institutions through scholarships for mobility of students and academics".



Both Academic Units will encourage the exchange of students and co-operative research training in medicine and the health sciences. Each institution may send graduate students of its Academic Unit to the other institution's Academic Unit. The cooperation may include, but is not necessarily limited to the following activities of research and research training: the exchange of Master of Science (MSc) students in medicine and the health sciences through a fellowship programme, the exchange of doctoral (PhD) students in medicine and the health sciences for a given period through an exchange programme to be jointly elaborated, the development of joint research projects in medicine and the health sciences with the financial support of external collaboration partners, including the private sector, and the exchange of documentation and research material.

Dr Carlos Martin Restrepo, Director MSc programme in Genetics, said:

"We are very proud to sign this agreement between Erasmus University's Erasmus Medical Center and Universidad del Rosario's Medical and Health Sciences School. Our genetics research teams have been exploring mutual interest investigation areas in genome analysis and genetic epidemiology, mainly in complex common entities as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, neurological disorders and cancer, which currently are under the worldwide leadership of Erasmus University; whereas premature ovarian failure, cystic fibrosis, pharmacogenetics and oral and facial clefts are today under study at Universidad del Rosario. The MoU will be the basis for a fruitful academic exchange in several forms: promoting short and long stance mobility for investigators and students; sharing knowledge, biological samples and clinical data; planning joint investigation and education projects in genetics, genomics, bioinformatics, epidemiology and health data management. As is currently said in our Colombian trade mark slogan, we will work "with passion" to make our MoU a real fact".

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Dr Carlos Trillios, Director of the postgraduate programme in Epidemiology, said:

"We are happy and pleased with the agreement signed between Erasmus University and Universidad del Rosario, which is certainly an opportunity for growth for both institutions.

The postgraduate programme in Epidemiology at Universidad del Rosario, established a decade ago, has opened a new perspective of study and research in health sciences, promoting the training of hundreds of professionals that have contributed to the development of research in public and private institutions in Colombia and America. This agreement with Erasmus University undoubtedly strengthens our scientific mission and is an opportunity for intercultural exchange in the field of research.

In addition, the grants program from Colciencias, (in commemoration of the bicentennial of the Independence of our country in 2009), would be an opportunity to support colombian students complete their Masters and PhD's education, allowing the successful development of the agreement.

We are grateful with Erasmus University for this important invitation and opportunity for academic, scientific and cultural exchange".

The Academic Units plan to work together in biomedical research through approaches intended to foster and stimulate scientific exchange and collaboration between students, researchers and faculty staff in both countries. Expected areas of mutual interest would include basic, clinical and public research in health sciences. Disciplines that have been identified of particular interest for this purpose are Epidemiology, Human Genetics, Public Health, Health Policy and Management. The Academic Units may identify additional areas of common scientific interest over time, as new information and health research priorities arise.

Dr Mónica Ortegón, Research Department, Medical and Health Sciences School, Universidad del Rosario, said:

"Aware of the importance of internationalization in higher education for knowledge and capacity building, through a first hand international training experience at NIHES, and considering my links to both institutions (as an ex NIHES master and doctor of science student, ex Rosario medical student and current researcher and teacher) I am very pleased with the agreement signed today. This would support academic excellence and innovation, contributing to the development of both institutions and to the socioeconomic growth of Colombia. I am very much looking forward to initiating activities within this cooperative relationship that we are launching today".



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About Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences – NIHES:

The Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences (NIHES) is an alliance of renowned Dutch universities and research institutes who collaborate and share knowledge in quantitative medical and health research. We offer graduate and postgraduate research training – Master of Science programmes and short courses – in quantitative medicine and the health sciences in our core disciplines: Epidemiology, Clinical Epidemiology, Genetic Epidemiology, Public Health, and Medical Informatics. We collaborate with five key institutes: Erasmus University Rotterdam, University of Amsterdam, Utrecht University, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Netherlands Cancer Institute.

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Erasmus Summer Programme:

The Erasmus Summer Programme is an initiative of the Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences (NIHES) in collaboration with Erasmus MC University Medical Center and Erasmus University Rotterdam. It is being held each year in August at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands. The programme focuses on key principles and methods of quantitative medical research. Open to students and health professionals, it provides essential updates in a range of applied medical and healthcare disciplines. As well as featuring courses for those particularly interested in clinical medicine, general practice and public health, it is suitable for epidemiologists, geneticists and biostatisticians, and includes genetic epidemiology, genomics in molecular medicine, large-scale multi-center studies, and genome-wide association analysis.

About Universidad del Rosario, Colombia:

The Universidad del Rosario is one of the most prestigious, private, nonprofit universities in Colombia. The University has a long tradition (355 years) in education and public service, and a strong research support policy.

It was founded on Roman Catholic principles in 1653 by Fray Cristobal de Torres. Located in Bogotá, Colombia, due to its important place in Colombian history, it is known as “the cradle of the republic”. Most faculties reside in the main campus in the historic-geographical centre of Bogotá in the historic district of La Candelaria. Nowadays this institution is based on secular ideas and is very influential in Colombian culture and public life. At least 28 of the Colombia’s presidents have been students of this university and it has influenced and participated in very important transitional processes like the revolution for the independence from Spain and the Political National Constitution of 1991. As a curious fact one of the most important times of the 1886 Constitution’s Supreme Court (1936), the so called golden court, was composed in its majority by lawyers from the Faculty of Jurisprudence. The University’s mission is to provide solid, ethical, humanistic and scientific education which, together with high quality standards for research and teaching, will allow the academic community to prepare distinguished individuals at the service of society and with a high sense of responsibility. The University offers 20 undergraduate programmes, all of which are fully certified or are in the process of being certified, offering the possibility of obtaining dual diplomas from academically prestigious international universities; more than 80 graduate specialization programmes, 8 master degree programmes and 3 Doctoral programmes.

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About Colciencias:

COLCIENCIAS is the administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation in Colombia. The Science & Technology Program enables Colombian professors and researchers in engineering and the natural and social sciences to pursue masters and doctoral degrees at universities outside Colombia. To date, the Program has enabled a total of 400 Colombian professionals to pursue graduate degrees abroad. The Science & Technology Program (formerly known as the COLCIENCIAS Program for the Formation of Human Resources and Strengthening of the Scientific Community) began in 1995 as a \$200 million project to promote advanced scientific training, research, and the dissemination of technological information. It was designed by COLCIENCIAS in collaboration with Colombia’s Instituto de Estudios Técnicos en el Exterior “Mariano Ospina Pérez” (ICETEX) and was funded by the Colombian government and the Inter-American Development Bank. Since the program’s inception in 1995, LASPAU has helped ensure its success by providing advising, monitoring, financial, and reporting services for grantees pursuing academic studies in the United States and 17 other countries around the world. The COLCIENCIAS Science & Technology Program provides awards in the form of a forgivable loan that requires the recipient to return to Colombia upon graduation. When a grantee returns to Colombia and resumes work at the sponsoring institution, a portion of the award is forgiven. The remainder may be partially or fully waived by COLCIENCIAS, depending on the academic accomplishments and professional achievements of the grantee.