



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



RĪGA STRADIŅŠ
UNIVERSITY

VirA-Twinning webpage - report

Deliverable D6.1

Project number - 952376 – VirA

Content

Home	2
Partners	4
Work packages	12
News	19
Events	22
Publications	27
Contacts	30



Reducing networking gaps between Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) and internationally leading counterparts in viral infection-induced autoimmunity research

Systemic autoimmune diseases (SAD) are a significant cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, creating a challenge for researchers and clinicians to find evidence-based solutions for SAD diagnostics, treatment and prevention.

Due to the complexity of autoimmune disease research, which requires multidisciplinary approaches, a problem is insufficient research capacity at low-performing EU Member State research institutions.

Research capacity, able to deliver precise and early diagnostic is of high importance to move towards the development of methods for personalized medicine and better understanding of triggers and mechanisms in autoimmunity, leading to better understanding of chronic diseases and comorbidities and searching for therapy options.

VirA project will optimally address the challenges and strengthen the ERA (European Research Area) in autoimmunity.

The overall aim of the project is to promote autoimmune disease research capacity and fill networking gaps in the institution (RSU) of the low-performing Member State – Latvia, by establishing a consortium with leading research institutions from Italy – University of Ferrara, Germany – Ulm University, and Israel – Medical Research Infrastructure Development and Health Services Fund by the Sheba Medical Center. The partner universities are the excellence centres (world leaders) that are forerunners in the corresponding areas and are capable of inspiring positive change in the research field and significantly impact future development.

Specific objectives

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE #1: Increased research excellence of the coordinating institution in the field of research as a result of the twinning exercise 

Increase mobility of qualified scientists through knowledge exchange between leading research institutions in Latvia, Italy, Germany and Israel. Upgrade competences and raise the experience level of

existing personnel in the topics of:

- immunology, virology and morphology;
- autoimmune disease research;
- clinical data management and database analysis;
- research paper preparation and proper high impact publication source selection in the corresponding research field;
- science and organisation management by strengthening the cooperation between local and international research groups.

Events

16
MAR

ISRAEL – LATVIA On-line
Symposium of
Autoimmunity

[See calendar](#)

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE #2 Enhance the reputation, attractiveness and networking channels of the coordinating institution ▲

Increase the recognition and reputation of RSU brand in the international research community among prospective students and researchers. Better integration of RSU into European Research Area and international top-tier research projects will be ensured through participation and organisation of international conferences, seminars, workshops, networking, and other events. To reach the project's objectives, the results are planned to be disseminated through marketing materials, publications on national and regional media, as well as on social media. There is also estimated 6 scientific articles to be published in reviewed, internationally recognized, and databaselinked journals with impact factor above 5 within the specific research field. Effective and high-quality management and coordination of project activities, will be ensured through close cooperation with project stakeholders, e.g. External advisory board, European Commission, project partners, as well as through strategic media relations.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE #3: Enhance the scientific and technological capacity of the linked institutions with a principal focus on the university or research organisation from the Widening Country ▲

Raise the research profile of RSU through the establishment of four platforms for multidisciplinary research (immunological, virology, morphology, clinical data management and modelling including bioinformatics) by contemporizing different RSU structures (MVI, Department of Infectology, Department of Internal Medicine, Laboratory of Electron microscopy of Institute of Anatomy and Anthropology). The establishment of the four platforms will be done in partnership with research institutions from Israel, Italy and Germany, adapting their expertise and good practice examples and focusing on autoimmune disease research (rheumatoid arthritis, autoimmune thyroiditis and myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS).



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Partners



Riga Stradiņš university (RSU)

Rīgas Stradiņa Universitāte (RSU) is a public University in Latvia covering 69 study programmes, among them 11 English-taught programmes, with a focus on medicine, pharmacy, rehabilitation, public health and selected areas of social sciences ... → [read more](#)

WWW.RSU.LV

RIGA STRADIŅŠ UNIVERSITY (RSU)

UNIVERSITY OF FERRARA (UNIFE)

UNIVERSITÄT ULM (UULM)

THE SHEBA MEDICAL CENTER



**Università
degli Studi
di Ferrara**

University of Ferrara (UniFe)

The University of Ferrara, founded in 1391, is one of the oldest in Italy. It consists of twelve Departments: Architecture; Humanities; Life Science and Biotechnology; Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Science; Biomedical and Surgical Science; ... → [read more](#)

WWW.UNIFE.IT



**universität
uulm**

Universität Ulm (UULM)

Founded in 1967, UHU enjoys an excellent reputation for innovative research and interdisciplinary training. ULM University is the youngest in Germany (founded in 1967), which have 5 faculties (i.e. Computer Science; Engineering; Mathematics and Economics; Medicine; and Natural Sciences) → [read more](#)

WWW.UNI-ULM.DE



The Sheba Medical Center

Zabludowicz Center for Autoimmune Diseases (3000 sqm) at the Sheba Medical Center is affiliated to Tel-Aviv University, Sackler Faculty of Medicine. This unique center entails departments, outpatient clinic as well as a large day care center for treatment with biological and other therapies → [read more](#)

WWW.SHEBA.CO.IL



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Rīga Stradiņš university



Rīga Stradiņš university

Rīgas Stradiņa University (RSU) is a public University in Latvia covering 69 study programmes, among them 11 English-taught programmes, with a focus on medicine, pharmacy, rehabilitation, public health and selected areas of social sciences. The University has around 9000 undergraduate, graduate and professional programme students as a result RSU is one of the largest entities in the Baltic States in the area of medicine, health sciences and pharmacy, and the only universal medical university in Latvia. The RSU holds a unique place in Latvia's scientific field, providing a full research cycle from laboratory to hospital bed. RSU has a high level of internationalisation with 2350 international students from 59 countries. RSU processes are ISO 9001:2008 certified (Bureau Veritas) and therefore RSU possesses a managerial capacity required by complex projects. RSU is currently amongst the top 3 Latvian Institutions considering research outputs such as patents and is one of the top 3 institutions that receive the highest funding for research in Latvia.

An ever-increasing attention is paid to the transfer of knowledge and technologies by integrating knowledge in the basic functions of the University, and also transforming knowledge in to products and services that are useful to the society. There are five doctorate study programmes operating at RSU – medicine, pharmacy, sociology, law, political science and seven doctorate councils: with bases in medical science, internal medicine, surgery, medicinal biomechanics, dentistry, pharmacy, sociology.

VirA project team



Assoc. Prof. Modra
Murovska



Asja Lunga



Assoc. Prof. Simona Doniņa



Zaiga Nora-Krūkle



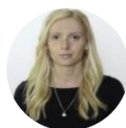
Asst. Prof. Sandra Skuja



Prof. Valērija Groma



Šimons Svirkis



Santa Rasa-Dzelzkalēja



Asst. Anda Kadiša



Prof. Angelika Krūmiņa



Irina Holodņuka



Asst. Jūlija Zepa



Alīna Sultanova



Maksims Čistjakovs



Anda Vilmane



Sabīne Grāvelsiņa



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



University of Ferrara



**Università
degli Studi
di Ferrara**

University of Ferrara

The University of Ferrara, founded in 1391, is one of the oldest in Italy. It consists of twelve Departments: Architecture; Humanities; Life Science and Biotechnology; Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Science; Biomedical and Surgical Science; Morphology, Surgery and Experimental Medicine; Medical Sciences; Engineering; Physics and Earth Science; Law; Management and Economics; Mathematics and Informatics.

The School of Medicine of the University of Ferrara is responsible of the teaching activities for approximately 4000 students (MD, Dentistry, Nursing, Physiotherapy degrees, and several other sanitary/technical degrees, such as Radiology, Biomedical Lab, Audiology, etc). The School of Medicine coordinates also all the clinical activities of the 3 Medical Departments, and the clinical activities are carried out mostly in the S.Anna University Hospital (Azienda Ospedaliero- Universitaria), located in Ferrara.

Some facts and figures about the University: approximately 25,000 students enrolled (6% are international students); 230 Socrates/Erasmus partners; 41 international research projects funded by FP7, of which 4 Coordinated by UniFe, and 3 funded and 1 in Grant Preparation phase in Horizon2020, several projects funded by other European research programmes; approximately 500 international cooperation agreements. There are 11 PhD programs operating in the different subject areas, and two of them (Molecular Medicine and Pharmacology; Biomedical and biotechnological Sciences) are directly relevant to the present application.

The relevance of the participation of the University of Ferrara to this project is the availability of both Clinical Units (Endocrinology, Rheumatology, Neurology, Gynecology) and Basic Science research groups of international relevance.

VirA project team



Prof. Dario Di Luca



Prof. Roberta Rizzo



Elisabetta Caselli



Antonella Rotola



Daria Bortolotti



Valentina Gentili



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



Universität Ulm



Universität Ulm

Founded in 1967, UHU enjoys an excellent reputation for innovative research and interdisciplinary training. ULM University is the youngest in Germany (founded in 1967), which have 5 faculties (i.e. Computer Science; Engineering; Mathematics and Economics; Medicine; and Natural Sciences) and now more than 10,000 students. Biomedicine and Biotechnology are a major focus of the university's research program. With help by InnoSüd at Ulm University, there is unique support for technology transfer to SMEs (<https://www.uni-ulm.de/en/technology-transfer/business-star...>), most recently, ERC-Proof of Concept projects by Prof. Jelezko (NDI) und Prof. Kirchhoff (Epi-X4Health) have been founded. These concepts provide a new focus on the use of peptides and technologies to understand immune deviations are as autoimmune dysfunction, and eventually lead to new treatment and disease prevention. Experiences at Ulm University will be highly useful to transfer to young investigators from the Baltic area. Knowledge transfer will be part of summer school initiatives as well.

VirA project team



Prof. Marion Schneider



Ning Dan



Prof. Manfred Weis



Karl Föhr



Li Chen



Christian Scheiber



Tabea Hein



Stefan Baeder



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

VirA Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Sheba Medical Center



Sheba Medical Center

Zabludowicz Center for Autoimmune Diseases (3000 sqm) at the Sheba Medical Center is affiliated to Tel-Aviv University, Sackler Faculty of Medicine. This unique center entails departments, outpatient clinic as well as a large day care center for treatment with biological and other therapies and a clinical studies center for the evaluation of new treatments. The center encompasses research and diagnostic laboratories that enable hospital service, Israeli and international collaboration between physicians and researchers from different fields (i.e. Internal Medicine, Clinical Immunology, Autoimmunity, Rheumatology, Neurology, Gastroenterology, Obstetrics and Gynecology), as well as a large auditorium, meeting rooms and student teaching rooms.

In the Zabludowicz center patients with different autoimmune diseases can be diagnosed and treated by a multidisciplinary team including old and new therapies, complementary medicine, psychological treatments etc. The research plans of the Zabludowicz center are in collaboration with other physicians and scientists in Israel and around the world. The center was founded by Prof. Yehuda Shoenfeld, a leading clinical immunologist and an expert in immunology and allergy, and a prolific researcher and author. Shoenfeld has published more than 2200 papers in scientific journals such as Blood, Cancer, Circulation, Immunology, Lancet, Nature, New England Journal of Medicine, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and more. He also has authored and edited 100 books, some of which are considered cornerstones of science and clinical practice, such as The Mosaic of Autoimmunity and the textbook Autoantibodies. He is also the founder and editor of the Israel Medical Association Journal and the internationally known journals Autoimmunity Reviews and J Autoimmunity.

Tel Aviv University (TAU) has over 2,200 faculty members, among them internationally renowned scientists who've made significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge in fields as diverse as particle physics, cell biology, biotechnology, genetics, fiber optics, the humanities, arts and social sciences. Israel's largest and most comprehensive university, TAU is comprised of nine faculties, 27 schools, 98 departments and some 130 research institutes and centers. Institutes and centers support research in a specific field. Often interdisciplinary in nature, they provide a formal framework for researchers, as well as their master's, doctoral and post-doctoral students, to collaborate and exchange ideas.

TAU runs Israel's largest bio-medical research and teaching framework with 1,400 scientist-clinicians at 17 affiliated hospitals serving over two million people. Our scientists are teaming up with pharmaceutical companies like Johnson & Johnson to develop new drugs and medical technologies".

VirA project team



Prof. Yehuda , Shoenfeld



Prof. Howard Amital



Prof. Miri Blank



Gilad Halpert



Shaye Kivity



Vania Vieira-Borba



Boris Gilburd



Ora Shovman



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Work packages



WP1 - MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION



WP2 - IMMUNOLOGY PLATFORM



WP3 - VIROLOGY PLATFORM



WP4 - MORPHOLOGY PLATFORM



WP5 - CLINICAL DATA MANAGEMENT AND MODELLING
PLATFORM



WP6 - DISSEMINATION, EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION,
SPREADING EXCELLENCE



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Work packages

WP1 - Management and Coordination



Project coordinator: Modra Murovska, Assoc. Prof., MD, Ph.D. Director of the Institute of Microbiology and Virology, RSU, Full Member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences (VirA coordinator). Her scientific interests are – virology, blood-borne viruses, persistent viral infections and their association with human pathologies, implication of viral infections in the pathogenesis of chronic inflammatory and autoimmune diseases (including neural diseases), role of viral infections in cancer development. In 2000 M.Murovska had got American Society for Microbiology Morrison Rogosa Award. She has strong experience in leadership of national and international (FP7 Baltinfect, COST Action CA15111) research projects.

Assoc. prof. Modra Murovska

Project coordinator, Leading Researcher
Phone: +37129554119
E-mail: Modra.Murovska@rsu.lv

Asja Lunga

WP1 leader, Project manager
Phone: +37167409152
E-mail: Asja.Lunga@rsu.lv



WP1 leader: Asja Lunga is an experienced project manager, leader of the Structural Funds Projects Department at the RSU. She has prepared and supervised most of the cohesion funds supported projects at RSU. Project manager of 7 FP project "Baltinfect" No 316275, H2020 project "Vactrain" No 692293, COST action project No 15111, mutual funds Taiwan- Latvia-Lithuania project 2017-2019.

WP1 objectives:

- Ensure overall coordination and management of the project, by guaranteeing a well-structured implementation of the activities that will be conducted during the project;
- Guarantee the quality control of the deliverables, timely reporting to the European Commission, efficient internal communication between the consortium members, identification and effective management of potential risks and monitoring of the work progress.

Tasks:

- 1.1. Project coordination
- 1.2. Quality management
- 1.3. Risk management
- 1.4. Internal communication
- 1.5. Coordination of Steering Committee and Advisory Group activities
- 1.6. Audit of project

Deliverables:

- D1.1 Project governance plan (M5)
- D1.2 Risk assessment report (M15)
- D1.3 General Assembly feedback (M36)



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



Work packages

WP2 - Immunology platform



WP2 leader: Simona Doniņa is Leading Researcher at the Institute of Microbiology and Virology of Riga Stradiņš University and consulting physician at Riga East University hospital. She is an oncologist and immunologist with an expertise in melanoma and her clinical and scientific interests are associated with tumor immunology, immunotherapy, cancer biomarkers and autoimmunity in association with cancer. She is representative of Latvian Association of Immunologists in European Federation of Immunology Societies.

Assoc. prof. Simona Doniņa

WP2 leader, Leading Researcher
Phone: +37167060843
E-mail: Simona.Donina@rsu.lv

WP2 objectives:

- Promote existing personnel competences in theoretical and practical immunology for advanced autoimmune disease research;
- Master new approaches of autoimmunity analysis;
- Promote and strengthen collaboration inside the multidisciplinary unit;
- Establish personal contacts with researchers from partnering countries to facilitate RSU integration in ERA.

Tasks:

- 2.1 Secondments organization and coordination for increasing of staff knowledge in immunology
- 2.2 Invitation of experts in immunology for knowledge transfer, participation in workshops and short-term training
- 2.3 Organization of 3-day workshop "New trends in autoimmune diseases immunological profiling"

Deliverables:

- D2.1 Materials on successful workshop accomplishment, including guidelines (M16)



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



Work packages

WP3 - Virology platform



WP3 leader: Zaiga Nora-Krūle is leading researcher at the Institute of Microbiology and Virology, has a strong background in Virology (herpesviruses, parvoviruses) and is currently studying the association between herpesviruses/parvoviruses and autoimmune diseases (Rheumatoid arthritis, ME/CFS) and human parvovirus B19, bocavirus and parvovirus 4 involvement in inflammatory neurological diseases using interdisciplinary approach. She has experience in the leadership of research projects and project platforms (leader of WP3 in FP7 Baltinfect project) currently are participating in COST Action CA15111 „European Network on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

(EUROMENE)“.

Zaiga Nora-Krūle

WP3 leader, Leading Researcher

Phone: +37167060837

E-mail: Zaiga.Nora@rsu.lv

WP3 objectives:

- Promote existing personnel capacity with competences in virology methods for persistent viral infection detection;
- Build capacity and transfer knowledge by involving undergraduate and post-graduate students;
- Acquire knowledge on viral infection involvement in the development of non-communicable diseases;
- Promote and strengthen collaboration inside a multidisciplinary unit;
- Establish personal contacts with the researchers from partnering countries to facilitate RSU integration in ERA

Tasks:

- 3.1 Secondment organization and coordination for increasing staff knowledge in virology
- 3.2 Invitation of experts in virology for knowledge transfer, participation in summer school with short-term training
- 3.3 Organization of 2-day workshop “Viral infection as aetiological or trigger factors of autoimmune diseases
- 3.4 Organization of a summer school “New trends in molecular and immunological detection methodology of persistent viral infection”

Deliverables:

- D3.1 Materials on successful workshop accomplishment (M10)
- D3.2 Materials on successful summer school accomplishment, including guidelines for WP3 (M22)

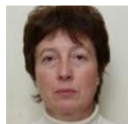


The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



Work packages

WP4 - Morphology platform



WP4 leader: Valeria Groma, Assoc. Prof., Ph.D., leading researcher, head of Joint Laboratory of ElectronMicroscopy, Institute of Anatomy and Anthropology, Riga Stradins University. Main domains of research: cellular vulnerability of different brain regions under exposure of chronic inflammatory process; application of imaging techniques for assessment of brain pathology; structural and ultrastructural assessments of the synovial membrane in common disabling joint disorders; morphological assessment of viral contribution to the development of autoimmune disease. She has strong experience in leadership of Latvian Academy of Sciences and Latvian Council of Science supported grants.

Prof. Valērija Groma

WP4 leader, Leading Researcher
 Phone: +37167321811
 E-mail: valerija.groma@rsu.lv

WP4 objectives:

- Promote existing personnel capacity with competences in morphology for advanced autoimmune disease research;
- Build capacity and transfer knowledge by involving undergraduate and post-graduate students
- Master in new morphological and immune-histochemical approaches of tissue damage and remodelling detection;
- Promote and strengthen the collaboration inside of multidisciplinary unit;
- Establish personal contacts with the researchers from partnering countries to facilitate RSU integration in the ERA.

Tasks:

- 4.1 Secondment organization and coordination for an increase in staff knowledge in morphology
- 4.2 Invitation of experts in morphology for knowledge transfer, participation in workshops and short-term training
- 4.3 Organization of a workshop, planned for months 22-24 on "Morphological studies in autoimmune disease research"

Deliverables

- D4.1 - Materials on successful workshop accomplishment including guidelines (M27)



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



Work packages

WP5 - Clinical data management and modelling platform



WP5 leader: Angelika Krūmiņa, MD, Ph.D., Prof., Since 2016 Professor of Medical Faculty, Riga Stradiņš University. Leading Researcher of the Institute of Food Safety, Animal Health and Environment "BIOR" and since 2019 member of Scientific Council in Institute of Microbiology and Virology, Riga Stradiņš University. Scientific interests are: herpesviruses, retroviruses, tick – borne diseases, chronic fatigue syndrome – laboratory diagnostic, clinical outcomes, treatment variations. She has experience in participation in National and International research grants. Board member of Latvian Medical Society,; vice president of the Society of Infectology and Hepatology in Latvia.

Prof. Angelika Krūmiņa

WP5 leader, Leading Researcher

Phone: +37167014717

E-mail: angelika.krumina@rsu.lv**WP5 objectives:**

- Promote existing personnel competences in clinical and laboratory data management, analysis, biostatistics and modelling to increase knowledge and competences in advanced autoimmune disease research;
- Build capacity and transfer knowledge by involving undergraduate and post-graduate students
- Acquire knowledge in proper diagnostic and differential diagnostic of rheumatic diseases;
- Promote and strengthen collaboration in the multidisciplinary unit;
- Establish personal contacts with the researchers from partnering countries to facilitate RSU integration in ERA.

Tasks:

- 5.1 Secondment organization and coordination for an increase in staff knowledge in clinical and laboratory data collection and methods of treatment, as well as in data management and modelling
- 5.2 Invitation of experts in clinical practise and data management and modelling for knowledge transfer, participation in workshops (2) and summer school with short-term training
- 5.3 Organization of the workshop "Importance of differential diagnostic in rheumatic diseases"
- 5.4 Organization of the workshop "Basic aspects of biostatistics, clinical and laboratory data management"
- 5.5. Organization of a summer school "Clinical and laboratory data management and modelling"

Deliverables:

- D5.1 Materials on successful workshop accomplishment including guidelines (M29)
- D5.2 Materials on successful summer school accomplishment including guidelines (M34)



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



Work packages

WP6 - Dissemination, external communication, spreading excellence



WP6 leader: Santa Rasa-Dzelzkalēja, Pd.D, young scientist, leading researcher at the Institute of Microbiology and Virology, has extensive experience in studies of viral – HHV- 6A/B, HHV-7 and parvovirus B19 in particular, involvement in ME / CFS pathogenesis. Participated in several research projects among them also COST Action CA15111 „European Network on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (EUROMENE)” and FP7 Capacity project Baltinfect “Unlocking infectious diseases research potential at Riga Stradiņš University”.

Santa Rasa-Dzelzkalēja

WP6 leader, Leading Researcher

Phone: +37167060837

E-mail: Santa.Rasa@rsu.lv

WP6 objectives:

- To enhance the reputation and attractiveness of RSU, the coordinating institution of VirA project;
- To ensure information base for successful collaboration in research, highlighting the activities of H2020;
- To increase social and political acceptance of EU programs and positive attitude towards sustainability of the results.

Tasks:

- 6.1 Creation and regular updating of webpage
- 6.2 Preparing, publication and dissemination of the flyer and brochure on RSU autoimmune disease research
- 6.3 Organization of a seminar “Enhancement of scientific manuscripts preparation quality” and grant coordination for scientific article publication
- 6.4 Providing information to the research community on topical issues in the field of autoimmune diseases, finding of new contacts and coordination of grants for conference attendance
- 6.5 Regular collaboration with public media to ensure flow of information
- 6.6 Providing research information for popular-scientific events in entertaining manner
- 6.7 Organization of the closing conference “Autoimmune diseases: main problems and solutions”
- 6.8 Organization of practical workshop of proposal preparation and project management

Deliverables:

- D6.1. Webpage-report (M3)
- D6.2 RSU flyer and brochure (M8)
- D6.3 Report on the participation in International conferences (M36)
- D6.4 Proceeding issues (M28)
- D6.5 Communication Report (M36)
- D6.6 Practical workshop on project proposal preparation and management (M30)
- D6.7 Conference “Autoimmune diseases: main problems and solutions” (M36)
- D6.8 Media monitoring report (M36)
- D6.9 VirA logo and visual identity guidelines (M1)
- D6.10 Data management plan (DMP) (M6)
- D6.11 Publications (M2)



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



News



Press Release - 15.12.2020

[News](#)

[News archive](#)

Events

16
MAR

ISRAEL – LATVIA On-line
Symposium of
Autoimmunity

[See calendar](#)



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Riga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Riga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Press Release - 15.12.2020



15 December 2020

News



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376



RĪGA STRADIŅŠ
UNIVERSITY

Reducing networking gaps between Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) and internationally- leading counterparts in viral infection –induced autoimmunity research” (VirA)

Grant agreement No. 952376

On 1 December 2020 RSU launches the implementation of EU Horizon2020 Framework programme Project „Reducing networking gaps between Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) and internationally -leading counterparts in viral infection –induced autoimmunity research” (VirA).

Project aims to promote autoimmune disease research capacity and fill networking gaps in the institution (RSU) of the low-performing Member State – Latvia, by establishing a consortium with leading research institutions from Germany - Ulm University, Italy - University of Ferrara, and Israel - Tel-Aviv University. The partner universities are the excellence centres (world leaders) that are forerunners in immunology, virology, morphology and clinical data management and modelling, and are capable of inspiring positive change in the research field and significantly influence future developments at RSU via joint activities.

Project activities include:

- Raising experience of the staff with short term exchanges;
- Bringing new knowledge to the university from expert visits and short-term on-site or virtual training;
- Organization of training workshops and joint summer schools to increase the networking ability of staff and foster knowledge transfer, including technical approaches and molecular methods;
- Conference participation and attendance to help with project dissemination and gathering of new information and global knowledge exchange.

The total costs of project are 899,992 EUR funded by the European Commission. The duration of the project is till 30 November 2023. It is the second project of the programme EU Horizon2020 Twinning action in the field of medicine implemented in RSU. The support from the European Commission will foster the development of the infectious disease research in Latvia and in the region. The implementation of VirA project will contribute to the integration of the Institute of Microbiology and Virology in a single European research field.

Project coordinator: Assoc. Professor Modra Murovska, director of Institute of Microbiology and Virology. The kick-off meeting of Project will take place in Zoom platform on **17 December 2020 , at 10:00, in the Senate hall of Rīga Stradiņš University**, Dzirciema Street 16, Rīga.

Heads of RSU structural units, researchers, university staff and anyone interested in research projects of the European level are welcome to participate in the meeting.

The meeting will be opened by RSU Rector, Professor Aigars Pētersons. Afterwards, Associate Professor Modra Murovska, coordinator of the project, will give a short insight into work directions and achievements of Institute of Microbiology and Virology in the field of science – a cornerstone of success of the project proposal as well as on project management structures and procedures. Project Leaders (Professor Marion Schneider, Germany; Professor Dario Di Luca, Italy; Professor Yehuda Shoenfeld, Israel) from the partnering countries will give short information on the interests and opportunities of the institution represented which will contribute to the realisation of the project.

Then Project work package leaders will present project Work Groups goals and activities.

External Advisory Board experts and Steering Committee – will also be present in the meeting.

Structural units involved in project implementation: Institute of Microbiology and Virology, Department of Infectology and Joint Laboratory of Electron Microscopy of Institute of Anatomy and Anthropology

Partnering organisations of the project: University of ULM, Germany, University of Ferrara, Italy, Medical Research Infrastructure Development and Health Services Fund by the Sheba Medical Center, Israel



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Events calendar

16 ISRAEL – LATVIA On-line Symposium of Autoimmunity

MAR

 09:00 – 17:00  online, Zoom[Events archive](#)

The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Events

16

MAR

ISRAEL – LATVIA On-line Symposium of Autoimmunity

09:00 - 17:00

online, Zoom

[Add to Google calendar](#) [Add to calendar \(ical\)](#)


GENERAL INFORMATION

AGENDA

ISRAEL – LATVIA On-line Symposium of Autoimmunity, on 16th March 2021.

Organized by VirA project partner Sheba Medical Centre.

More detailed information about the Symposium will be provided soon.

Room

online, Zoom

Tā kā Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte ir publiska iestāde, pasākuma laikā jūs varat tikt fotografēts un/ vai filmēts. Fotografijas un video var tikt publicēts universitātes mājaslapā, sociālajos medijos u. tml. Vairāk par savām tiesībām un iespēju iebilst pret šādu datu apstrādi varat uzzināt [RSU Privātuma politikā](#). Ja iebilstat pret personas datu apstrādi, lūdzam par to informēt, rakstot uz rsu@rsu.lv.

Date: 16.03.2021.

As Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) is a public institution you could be photographed and/or filmed during the event. Your personal data might be used to further the interests of RSU, e.g. for marketing or communication activities (incl. social media coverage). Read more about your rights see the [RSU Privacy Policy](#). Should you have any objections to your personal data being processed please inform us via e-mail at rsu@rsu.lv.

Contacts

Prof. Yehuda , Shoenfeld

E-mail:

Yehuda.Shoenfeld@sheba.health.gov.il



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Events archive

17 VirA kick-off meeting

DEC

 10:00 - 14:00  Dzirciema street 16, Rīga, LV-1007 [Senate hall / online, Zoom](#)

The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Events

17

VirA kick-off meeting

DEC

🕒 10:00 - 14:00

📍 Dzirciema street 16, Rīga, LV-1007 Senate hall / online, Zoom

[Add to Google calendar](#) [Add to calendar \(ical\)](#)


GENERAL INFORMATION

The kick-off meeting of Project will take place in Zoom platform on 17 December 2020 , at 10:00, in the Senate hall of Rīga Stradiņš University, Dzirciema Street 16, Riga.

Heads of RSU structural units, researchers, university staff and anyone interested in research projects of the European level are welcome to participate in the meeting.

The meeting will be opened by RSU Rector, Professor Aigars Pētersons. Afterwards, Associate Professor Modra Murovska, coordinator of the project, will give a short insight into work directions and achievements of Institute of Microbiology and Virology in the field of science – a cornerstone of success of the project proposal as well as on project management structures and procedures. Project Leaders (Professor Marion Schneider, Germany; Professor Dario Di Luca, Italy; Professor Yehuda Shoenfeld, Israel) from the partnering countries will give short information on the interests and opportunities of the institution represented which will contribute to the realisation of the project.

Then Project work package leaders will present project Work Groups goals and activities.

External Advisory Board experts and Steering Committee – will also be present in the meeting.

 [Agenda](#)

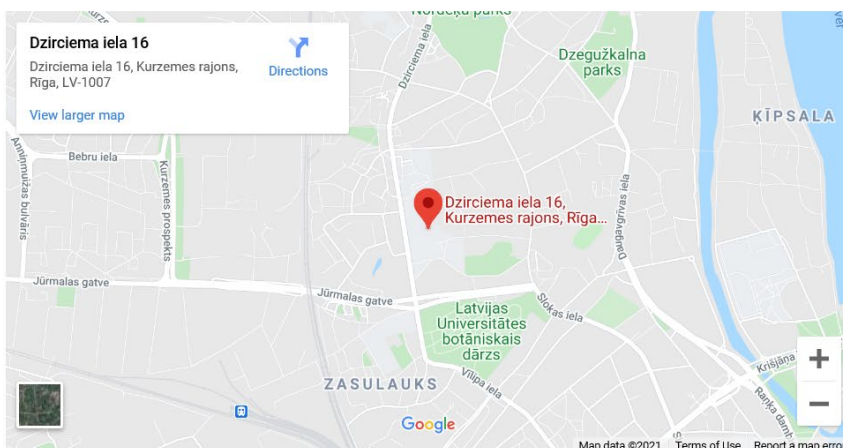
Contacts

Assoc. prof. Modra Murovska

Phone: +37129554119

E-mail: Modra.Murovska@rsu.lv

Location



Tā kā Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte ir publiska iestāde, pasākuma laikā jūs varat tikt fotografēts un/ vai filmēts. Fotogrāfijas un video var tikt publicēts universitātes mājaslapā, sociālajos medijos u. tml. Vairāk par savām tiesībām un iespēju iebilst pret šādu datu apstrādi varat uzzināt [RSU Privātuma politikā](#). Ja iebilstat pret personas datu apstrādi, lūdzam par to informēt, rakstot uz rsu@rsu.lv.

Date: 17.12.2020.

As Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU) is a public institution you could be photographed and/or filmed during the event. Your personal data might be used to further the interests of RSU, e.g. for marketing or communication activities (incl. social media coverage). Read more about your rights see the [RSU Privacy Policy](#). Should you have any objections to your personal data being processed please inform us via e-mail at rsu@rsu.lv.



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Publications



2018 2019 2020

- Sotzny F, Blanco J, Capelli E, Castro-Marrero J, Steiner S, Murovska M, Scheibenbogen C. Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome - Evidence for an autoimmune disease. *Autoimmun Rev.* 2018 Jun; 17(6): 601-609. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.autrev.2018.01.009>
- Estévez-López F, Castro-Marrero J, Wang X, Bakken IJ, Ivanovs A, Nacul L9, Sepúlveda N, Strand EB, Pheby D, Alegre J, Scheibenbogen C, Shikova E, Lorusso L, Capelli E, Sekulic S, Lacerda E, Murovska M. European Network on ME/CFS (EUROMENE) Prevalence and incidence of myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome in Europe-the Euro-epiME study from the European network EUROMENE: a protocol for a systematic review. *BMJ Open.* 2018; 8(9): e020817. Published online 2018 Sep 4. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-020817>
- Rasa S, Nora-Krukle Z, Henning N, Eliassen E, Shikova E, Harrer T, Scheibenbogen C, Murovska M, Prusty BK. Chronic viral infections in myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). *European Network on ME/CFS (EUROMENE). J Transl Med.* 2018 Oct 1; 16(1): 268. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12967-018-1644-y>



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Riga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Riga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Publications



2018 **2019** 2020

- Sultanova A, Čistjakovs M, Sokolovska L, Cunsis E, Murovska M. Possible involvement of human herpesvirus-6 U83 gene expression in autoimmune thyroiditis development. Proc Latvian Acad Sci, Section B, 2019, 73(2/719): 78-83, <https://doi.org/10.2478/prolas-2019-0013>
- Sokolovska L, Sultanova A, Čistjakovs M, Cunsis E, Murovska M. Monocytes/ macrophages act as mediators for human herpesvirus-6 infection of thyroid gland in patients with autoimmune thyroiditis. Proc Latvian Acad Sci, Section B, 2019, 73 (2/719): 112-116, <https://doi.org/10.2478/prolas-2019-0018>
- Kadiša A, Nora-Krukule Z, Svirskis Š, Studers P, Girkonaite I, Lejnieks A, Murovska M. Cytokines and MMP-9 levels in rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis patients with persistent parvovirus B19, HHV-6 and HHV-7 infection. Proc Latvian Acad Sci, Section B, 2019, 73 (4/721): 278-287, <https://doi.org/10.2478/prolas-2019-0045>
- Tarasovs, M., Skuja, S., Semenistaja, S., Murovska, M., Groma, V. Synovitis in osteoarthritic patients: Morphological and virological evidence of its contribution to development of the disease. Proc Latvian Acad Sci, Section B, 2019, 73 (4/721): 317-324, <https://doi.org/10.2478/prolas-2019-0050>
- Rasa-Dzelzkaleja S, Čapenko S, Krūmiņa A, Yung-Cheng Lin, Murovska M. Association of human parvovirus B19 infection with development and clinical course of myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome. Proc Latvian Acad Sci, Section B, 2019, 73 (5/722): 411-418, <https://doi.org/10.2478/prolas-2019-0065>
- Kholodnyuk I, Kadisa A, Svirskis S, Gravelisina S, Studers P, Spaka I, Sultanova A, Lejniece S, Lejnieks A, Murovska M. Proportion of the CD19-Positive and CD19-Negative Lymphocytes and Monocytes within the Peripheral Blood Mononuclear Cell Set is Characteristic for Rheumatoid Arthritis. Medicina (Kaunas). 2019 Sep 24; 55(10), <https://doi.org/10.3390/medicina55100630>
- Krumina A, Chapenko S, Kenina V, Mihailova M, Logina I, Rasa S, Gintere S, Viksna L, Svirskis S, Murovska M. The role of HHV-6 and HHV-7 infections in the development of fibromyalgia. J Neurovirol. 2019; 25(2): 194-207, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13365-018-0703-8>
- Gravelisina S, Nora-Krukule Z, Svirskis S, Cunsis E, Murovska M. Presence of B19V in patients with thyroid gland disorders. Medicina 2019, 55(12): 774, <https://doi.org/10.3390/medicina55120774>



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Rīga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Rīga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Publications



2018 2019 **2020**

- Groma V, Tarasovs M, Skuja S, Semenistaja S, Nora-Krukle Z, Svirskis S, Murovska M. Inflammatory Cytokine-Producing Cells and Inflammation Markers in the Synovium of Osteoarthritis Patients Evidenced in Human Herpesvirus 7 Infection. *Int J Mol Sci.* 2020 Sep; 21(17): 6004. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms21176004>
- Shikova E, Reshkova V, Kumanova A, Raleva S, Alexandrova D, Capo N, Murovska M; European Network on ME/CFS (EUROMENE). Cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus, and human herpesvirus-6 infections in patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome. *J Med Virol.* 2020 Mar 4. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jmv.25744>
- Sultanova A, Cistjakovs M, Sokolovska L, Todorova K, Cunsis E, Murovska M. HHV-6 Infection and Chemokine RANTES Signaling Pathway Disturbance in Patients with Autoimmune Thyroiditis. *Viruses.* 2020 Jun 26;12(6):689. <https://doi.org/10.3390/v12060689>



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Riga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Riga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)



Contacts



Assoc. Prof. Dr. med. Modra Murovska

Project coordinator

Leading Researcher

☎ +37129554119 ✉ Modra.Murovska@rsu.lv

Address: Riga Stradiņš University, Microbiology and virology institute, Ratsupites str. 5, Riga, LV – 1067, Latvia



The project leading to this application has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952376

Vira Project

© 2021 Riga Stradiņš University, 16 Dzirciema Street, Riga, LV-1007, Latvia, +371 67409261, rsu@rsu.lv, (UTC +3)