

**EUROLAB** 

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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## Foreword by the President

Throughout 2023, our Secretariat and colleagues have been actively involved in a variety of engagements and meetings. These interactions, along with the efforts of the Secretariat and our Members, are not just beneficial but crucial in raising EUROLAB's profile among our partners and stakeholders. Such initiatives expand our collaboration opportunities while enhancing the representation of the laboratory sector a sector pivotal in generating essential data for knowledge advancement across various domains such health, as environment, technological development, manufacturing and construction industries.

**Ensuring** adequate representation laboratories within the European quality infrastructure and on a national level is a matter of collective interest. Membership in national laboratory associations, or their establishment where absent, is vital for fostering collaboration with national stakeholders and National Accreditation Bodies. This benefits the Accreditation Bodies by providing well-prepared and contributing partners, each bringing their expertise and responsibilities to the table.

EUROLAB, as the European Federation of National Laboratory Associations, underlines the importance of these associations, both nationally and for internationally, essential tools as enhancing and the efficiency standardization of the entire quality infrastructure.



#### Paolo Moscatti

Our mission is not something that can be outsourced; it demands the involvement and dedication of everyone who recognises the significance and impact that laboratories have, and will continue to have, on our society.

There is a substantial amount of work to be done, and we are already in motion. Join us in our efforts to do it better and quicker. Your support is invaluable as we navigate this path together.



## Foreword by the Secretary General



#### Laura Martin

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In 2023, EUROLAB joined and promoted multiple initiatives, collaborative actions and projects that underline our commitment in supporting the enhancement of laboratory best practices. The strength of our activities lies in the joint projects we've embarked upon stakeholders, with various exploring new and relevant fields food quality, as digitalisation, and sustainable laboratory practices.

The collective efforts invested in preparing proposals for EU-funded projects have been instrumental in addressing the dynamic challenges associated with the evolution towards the Lab of the Future.

During 2024, EUROLAB's focus will revolve around further enhancing engagement opportunities and exploring research project prospects centred on the Lab of the Future and beyond. This includes organising seminars and convening experts on specific topics aligned with the identified 2024 policy priorities, such as sustainability, food safety, blockchain, Al, cybersecurity, energy efficiency, Additionally, EUROLAB will strengthen its involvement in sectors such as metrology, calibration, accreditation, standardisation matters through activities developed in the Technical Committee on Quality Assurance (TCQA).

The Secretariat will continue focusing on raising the EUROLAB visibility, not only through participation and representation in high level events, but also through a targeted online presence. This includes active engagement on platforms like our website and LinkedIn account, where our following is steadily approaching 10000. Building a strong collaborative platform is key for EUROLAB, offering members not only regular, up-to-date information on key topics but also opportunities for engagement in awareness-raising activities, technical events, finding national accessing project partners, and opportunities. This collective effort contributes to the rapid advancement of the laboratory community as a whole.



#### **EUROLAB** in Brief

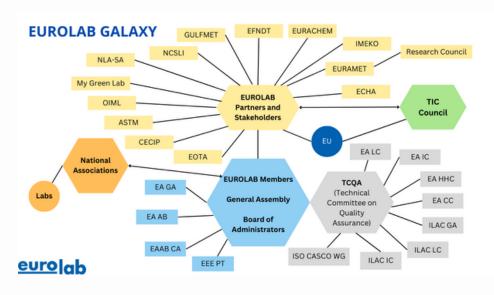
EUROLAB is the European Federation of National Associations of Measurement, Testing and Analytical Laboratories, grouping together 25 National Associations of accredited laboratories, composed of 17 Active Members, 3 Associated Members, 1 Observer Member and 3 International Affiliates from Europe and beyond.

It represents and voices the opinions of measurement, testing and analytical laboratories regarding economic, political and technical issues having a direct impact on laboratories' activities both on the European scene and worldwide.

Any laboratory may join and become a member of the European community that EUROLAB represents by subscribing to its National Association.



EUROLAB collaborates with a wide range of European and International stakeholders. It has Memoranda of Understanding with IMEKO, Eurachem and EURAMET, and works closely with TIC Council, My Green Lab, ECHA and other partners from the industry and laboratory sectors.



EUROLAB is an Associated Member of TIC Council - the International Association representing independent testing, inspection and certification companies - and shares joint Secretariat in Brussels.

EUROLAB represents its members' interests in influencing the development of international standards and accreditation rules through its engagement with ISO, ILAC and EA and their constituent working groups.



## Membership Categories

EUROLAB members are divided in four categories, based on different requirements depending on the profile of the applicant. All of them must be constituted under the laws and regulations of their country of origin:

<u>Active members:</u> one legal not-for-profit entity per member of the European Union (EU) or the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which must have demonstrated its representative character concerning public or private measurement, testing and analytical laboratories within its national community;

<u>Associated members:</u> one legal not-for-profit entity per country from countries eligible for membership to the EU or EFTA, or which country is a participating member of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which must have demonstrated its representative character concerning public or private measurement, testing and analytical laboratories within its national community;

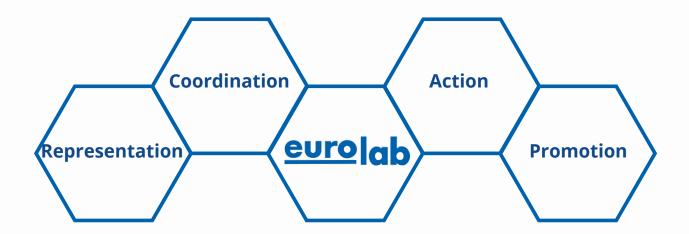
<u>Observer members:</u> legal entities or associations or groups of organisations not eligible for active or associated membership, with an interest in measurement, testing and analytical activities;

<u>International affiliate members:</u> legal entities or associations or groups of organisations constituted under the laws and regulations of their country of origin not eligible for active or associated membership, with an interest in measurement, testing and analytical activities.





### **Objectives**



Representation by formulating and voicing the opinions of European laboratories regarding political and technical issues having a direct impact on their activity, both on the European scene and worldwide.

Coordination by interfacing with all European organisations having activities of interest to the laboratory community, and striving to avoid duplication of efforts and activities.

Action by providing adequate means for exchange of information and experience, such as the publication of our Position Papers, Technical Reports, Newsletter, Seminars, Working Groups, etc.

Promotion of cost-effective testing, calibration and measurement services, for which the accuracy and quality assurance requirements should be adjusted to the actual needs.



#### **Secretariat**



Secretary General

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In order to be a recognised stakeholder and to be actively involved in EU-related matters and increase its visibility on the EU scene, it is important for the EUROLAB Secretariat to be located in Brussels.

The EUROLAB General Secretariat firstly provides a platform for our members to discuss their issues of concern and to exchange information and viewpoints, and, secondly acts as a facilitator of members' interests to the EU institutions. The General Secretariat supports also the Technical Committees, which provide expert input on key legislative or standardisation initiatives, as well as working closely together with key stakeholders on common issues of interest for the laboratory community.

#### Services provided by the EUROLAB Secretariat:

- Representation in the EU institutions;
- Monitoring selected EU legislation and international developments;
- Organising meetings, events, seminars;
- Publication of quarterly newsletter, position papers, communication materials, special briefings;
- Cooperation with European and international stakeholders;
- Raising visibility within laboratory communities;
- Active involvement in EU projects.

#### **EUROLAB** priority areas for 2024:

- Regulation Bodies: developments in European legislation on testing, conformity assessment and product safety in the fields:
  - ESG, including sustainability, Green Deal, Corporate Social Responsibility
  - Food
  - Medical Devices
  - Energy
- Metrology and Calibration
- Accreditation and Standardisation
- The Lab of the Future developments, including machine learning, digitalisation, cybersecurity, robotisation, Al, blockchain, etc



## **EUROLAB Highlights 2023**

## Strategic meetings with key stakeholders

In the beginning of the year, EUROLAB organised fruitful meetings with IMEKO - International Measurement Confederation and EURAMET - The European Association of National Metrology Institutes to plan the joint work programme for the following months. Identified topics of common interest included digitalisation and the Lab of the Future, the impact and role of digitalisation for the metrology and the laboratory sector, policy and technical developments in the fields of sustainability, food safety and quality, health and medical devices.





On 1-2 February, EUROLAB Secretary General Laura Martin, joined the EURAMET TC for Metrology in Chemistry annual meeting 2023, taking place at the LNE offices, our local member EUROLAB France. During the first plenary day, Ms Martin provided a presentation on EUROLAB scope, membership, activities, committees, projects and international collaboration with key stakeholders.



Ms Martin also attended the Plenary Session of the 17th EURAMET General Assembly and the General Council Sessions of IMEKO, presenting EUROLAB's latest updates, activities, projects and the successful international collaboration with its key partners.





On 3 April, Ms Martin joined the first Annual General Meeting of the EURAMET European Metrology Network (EMN) for Pollution Monitoring (PolMo), whim aims to create a sustainable metrology infrastructure to support European and international regulations and directives targeting pollution monitoring, using smart specialisation to maximise outcomes from currently available research resources.

EUROLAB became a Member of the EMNs for Pollution Monitoring and for Safe and Sustainable Food, and has been engaging with various other Technical Committees and Working Groups.





In 2023, Ms Martin also attended both General Assemblies of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), taking place in Dubrovnik (Croatia) and in Dublin (Ireland).

As member of the EA Strategic Task Force Group (TFG) Communication, Ms Martin contributed to the draft and presentation of the strategic communications proposal, including the outcomes and recommendations of the Task Force Group.

On 23 May, Ms Martin presented EUROLAB activities, expectations and collaboration ideas during the first Stakeholder Meeting of the <u>PlasticTrace</u> project.

The initiative addresses the urgent need for development and harmonisation of methods for the chemical identification, physical characterisation and quantification of released small micro/nanoplastics in drinking water, food and environmental matrices, as required by the EU's Circular Economy Action Plan.

EUROLAB is glad to give its support as part of the PlasticTrace Stakeholder Advisory Board.

On 15 June, Ms Martin joined the elective assembly of ASSOTIC, the Italian Association of Conformity Assessment Bodies.

During the meeting, many areas of common interest were highlighted, as sustainability and digitalisation, setting the basis for a fruitful upcoming collaboration.





### Internal meetings

The **EUROLAB General Assembly and Accompanying Events 2023** took place on 27 and 28 April 2023 in person and online, hosted at the University of Warsaw Biological and Chemical Research Centre (CNBCh UW), in Warsaw (Poland), by our local member POLLAB.

On 27 April, the day started with the Board Meeting, during which particular attention was given to internal financial and legal matters and the upcoming strategic Secretariat action plan.

The Board was followed by the meeting of the Technical Committee on Quality Assurance in Testing and Calibration (TCQA), which focused on discussing the internal developments concerning upcoming publications, progresses and next steps of its Working Groups and the reports of our experts attending external task forces and technical committees.

The General Assembly on the following day started with the presentation of the EUROLAB Activity Report 2023, which included key policy priorities and initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat since the beginning of the year. Attention was given to collaboration with members and stakeholders and to the latest advancements regarding the EUROLAB projects as the Lab of the Future, communications and visibility key actions, and engagement strategy with National Members.

TThe General Assembly also approved the following mandates:

- Re-elections of the Board of Directors:
  - Álvaro Silvia Ribeiro, Relacre
  - Irache Visiers, EUROLAB-Spain
  - Jean-Luc Laurent, EUROLAB-France
  - Luc Scholtis, Fenelab
  - Leif Madsen, EUROLAB-Denmark
  - Pericles Agathonos, HellasLab
- Re-elections of the following positions into the BoD:
  - EUROLAB President Paolo Moscatti, ALPI
  - EUROLAB Vice-President Irache Visiers, EUROLAB-Spain
  - EUROLAB Vice-President Alexander Šafařík-Pštrosz, EUROLAB-CZ
  - EUROLAB Treasurer Jean-Luc Laurent,
     EUROLAB-France
- Election of Andreas Kinzel, EUROLAB-Germany as the new Chair of the TCQA.







The **EUROLAB National Members' Meeting 2023** took place on 11-13 October 2023 in Funchal, Madeira (Portugal), at Vidamar Hotels and Resorts Madeira, kindly hosted by EUROLAB local member RELACRE.

The first day started with the meeting of the TCQA and the presentation of the new structure of the working groups to be developed in the following months.

The second day started with the Board Meeting, during which various issues were discussed regarding EUROLAB internal administrative matters and the event plan for 2024, which will see a number of online webinars and trainings offered to the members and external participants.

After that, the National Members' Meeting focused on the following key topics:

- The presentation of the EUROLAB Activity Report 2023 and strategy, which also included preliminary results from the survey conducted by EUROLAB to assess the level of digitalisation of the laboratory community,
- EUROLAB strategic planning for 2024, including the confirmation of the policy priorities,
- Contributions from the members and invited stakeholders, including presentations by the Croatian Metrology Society, ASSOTIC, EUROLAB CZ, IMEKO, EURAMET and Eurachem.





The internal meetings took place along the **IMEKO Joint Conference TC8, TC11, TC24**, co-organised by the IMEKO TCs, RELACRE, EUROLAB, LNEC, ARM (Water and Residues of Madeira), the University of Madeira and the Madeira City Council.

The scientific program saw the participation of several international guest speakers, focusing on topics as the digitisation of laboratory processes, the Lab of the Future, digitalisation of the quality infrastructure and solid-state gas sensors and their applications in the field of metrology.

For the first time, this event brought together several communities from the TIC (Testing, Inspection and Certification) sector of the IMEKO Technical Committees with delegates from the European Associations of laboratories that are members of EUROLAB, academia, industry and laboratories, gathering more than 70 participants from 22 countries.



#### **EUROLAB** webinars

The recordings and materials of all the webinars organised by EUROLAB in 2023 are still available upon request. If interested, please contact <a href="mailto:info@eurolab.org">info@eurolab.org</a>



The EUROLAB webinar "MICROPLASTICS: regulations, standards and the role of laboratories" took place online on 15-16 February.

Many interesting views on the definition and analysis of microplastics, standardisation initiatives and much more were presented by the speakers, with the objective to share knowledge and best practices to solve the global issue of microplastics release.



On 5 July, the joint EUROLAB - NLA South Africa online workshop "Towards the Lab of the Future. Embracing today's challenges to meet tomorrow's opportunities." took place.

The workshop highlighted some of the key issues that laboratories are facing and the developments that are currently being implemented in the digitalisation process, mostly focusing on the Lab of the Future advancements in Africa.



On 29 and 30 November, the **EUROLAB** webinar "Build a sustainability culture in your lab" took place online.

Participants could learn and interact with our great pool of speakers, who provided a very detailed and comprehensive overview of many different topics in the field of sustainability, which raised the interest of participants and fruitful discussions during the Q&A sessions.



## Collaboration and key representation at events



**OIML Seminar** 

"The future of the OIML in the digital era" 16 October 2023, Chiang Mai, Thailand

(Version 2.0 - 2023-09-19)

Ms Martin contributed to the seminar with the keynote presentation "EUROLAB: an international collaboration towards the Lab of the Future", touching upon some relevant topics including digitalisation.



Ms Martin also joined a session on digitalisation at the first International Conference of Weighing (ICW). Her presentation focused on the challenges and benefits of the digitalisation process for small and medium laboratories.



Ms Martin attended the **European Conference on Non-Destructive Testing 2023** in Lisbon (Portugal).

EUROLAB was glad to be an institutional supporter of the ECNDT 2023, hosted by the Portuguese Society of NDT to feature the most recent advancements in research and development, as well as the application of NDT in various industrial sectors.



On 14 September, the EUROLAB President Paolo Moscatti joined the **VII National Measurement Forum** with a presentation on "The EUROLAB network for the political and technical representation of European laboratories".

The forum represented an important scientific event as a meeting point for all Italian researchers and experts in the field of measurements.



On 28 April, two representatives from EUROLAB Italian member contributed to the Workshop on "Digitalization in conformity assessment: Current practices, challenges and implications for future" organised by ISO CASCO, with a presentation on the case of ABC Bilance and Metricode as an example of smart calibration through digitisation.



In 2023, EUROLAB became one of the **institutional sponsors of the Labsummit® 2024**, taking place on 16-18 May 2024 in Coimbra (Portugal), jointly organised by RELACRE, ISQ and Ambidata.



The international event aims to bring together professionals from the laboratory industry, scientists and policy makers, managers and administrators, students, and all those interested in discussing the latest trends, technologies, and challenges of the present and future in the field of laboratories.

It focuses on four distinct pillars - Laboratory, Digital, Productivity, and Sustainability - which represent the main concerns and challenges faced by laboratory professionals.

Further information on the event website: www.labsummit.com

EUROLAB partnered up with My Green Lab on two interesting events in 2023:

- My Green Lab Europe Summit 2023 aimed at convening the best green labs initiatives from the continent, providing three main perspectives on sustainability challenges and efforts industry, academia, and healthcare systems.
- The **2023 My Green Lab Global Summit** explored practical tools and strategies for engaging scientists in a process that lead to lasting and measurable impact.





### **Key publications**

EUROLAB has published several newsbriefings and reports that are of interest for its membership and laboratory community.

This briefing focuses on the effects on consumers, Member States and officially accredited independent bodies that will serve as verifiers for the requirements of the **Proposed Green Claims Directive**. It concludes with brief remarks on the standard ISO/DIS 14068 that serves as a guide to achieve and demonstrate carbon neutrality claims.



The briefing highlights the steps that brought to the revision of the current **Directive on Toy Safety** and the new rules that the Commission aims to implement with the revised Regulation, in particular to increase protection from harmful chemicals and implement better enforcement.



Under the TCQA, EUROLAB published a revision of the technical report "Guide to NMR Method Development and Validation – Part I: Identification and Quantification".

The report proposes special criteria to facilitate the development of any practical application of an NMR method.



Technical Report No. 01/2023

June 2023

Guide to NMR Method Development and Validation – Part I: Identification and Quantification

The lab of the future is driven by fastchanging new technologies but the implementation processes remain slow, in particular for small and medium-sized laboratories.

EUROLAB has thus developed a survey to assess the current level of digitalisation within laboratories, the needs and key challenges that they face, and the next steps and topics that EUROLAB could consider to support the laboratory community in the process.





## **Key dates**

#### **World Laboratory Day 2023**



On this day, EUROLAB celebrated the importance of laboratories in its daily actions. EUROLAB will continue putting its efforts and commitment in representing the voice of laboratories in Europe and beyond, focusing on the needs and challenges towards the lab of the future.

#### **World Accreditation Day 2023**



Last year's theme, Accreditation: Supporting the Future of Global Trade, focused on how accreditation and conformity assessment are adapting to changes in technology, consumer behaviours and regulatory environment, new trust mechanisms, and business models. It is a global initiative established by ILAC and IAF.

#### **World Metrology Day 2023**



EUROLAB celebrated this day joining the conference organised by the Croatian Metrology Society under the theme "Measurements Supporting the Global Food System". The event focused on the importance of measurements in the food industry to ensure food safety and quality.

#### **World Standards Day 2023**



International standards and conformity assessment play a crucial role in reaching the targets of SDG 3 - healthy planet, healthy people. As digital health technology develops, standards from ISO, IEC and ITU help ensure that systems are secure and the privacy of patients is protected.



## **EUROLAB TCQA Activities**

#### Restructuring of the TCQA and new Working Groups

After his election as Chair of the EUROLAB TCQA, Andreas Kinzel presented the plan for a new structure of the EUROLAB Technical Committee on Quality Assurance in Testing and Calibration (TCQA). Four horizontal Working Groups have been created, dedicated to the topics of Accreditation and Standardisation, Cook Books and Technical Reports, Digitalisation, and Sustainability.

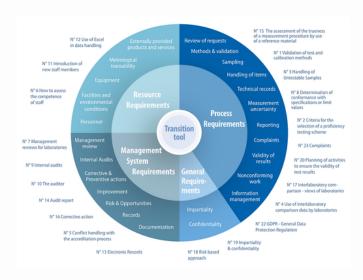
The laboratory industry is facing a variety of challenges, particularly the everincreasing requirements for accreditation and standardisation, the changes resulting from digitalisation and the need for laboratories to be part of a sustainability strategy. Therefore, the WGs have been set up to allow EUROLAB members and experts to contribute with their knowledge and expertise about standardisation, accreditation, digitalisation or sustainability in the interest of the entire laboratory community/industry.

The structure of the WGs was settled in 2023 and their work will develop over 2024. The WGs are open for participation to EUROLAB members as well as external stakeholders and experts involved in the identified topics.

EUROLAB issued its position on the possible revision of the *ISO/IEC 17025:2017 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*, after collecting the opinions of the members of TCQA through an internal survey.

EUROLAB also supported the adoption of the latest revision of the *ILAC-P9:xx/202x ILAC Policy for Proficiency Testing and/or Interlaboratory comparisons other than Proficiency Testing*.

EUROLAB submitted as well a series of comments to the revision of *EA-1/15 Policy for Relations with Stakeholders*.



#### **Undergoing publications:**

- Technical report Guidelines for the Management of Digitalised Systems and Data in Laboratories Accredited to ISO/IEC 17025
- Revision of the Guidance for the Management of Computers and software in Laboratories with reference to ISO/IEC 17025:2005
- Revision of the technical report Decision rules applied to conformity assessment



## EUROLAB key topic: the Lab of the Future

EUROLAB has been organising various activities around the topic, in collaboration with our partners and stakeholders, among which DG TRADE (European Commission), EURAMET, IMEKO, NLA-South Africa, UNIDO, My Green Lab, and many more.

In particular, focus areas are blockchain for metrology, digital transformation and digital solutions for labs, LIMS, challenges to free trade for laboratories and the lab of the future in developing countries.

EUROLAB has also developed a survey on the level of digitalisation within the laboratory community, with the support of Kruno Miličević, coordinator of the Metroracle Project. The survey aimed to identify the current status of digitalisation within the laboratories, their needs and key challenges for a sustainable digitalisation strategy, and the next steps and topics that EUROLAB could consider to support its members in this process.

Specific activities on The Lab of the Future and other funded projects include:

- Draft proposal for the application to an EU Horizon Programme on the topic of blockchain "Proposal for the use of an open Blockchain to ensure conformity assessment documents traceability in the international market".
- Project proposal for a qualification training for laboratory staff in areas related to digitalisation. The aim is to develop an online platform providing laboratory experts access to the latest and most relevant education and training materials on specific topics that are foreseen as key in the laboratory of the future, as data management, robotisation and automation, the sustainable future of your lab.
- EU-funded project on "Environmentally Sustainable Practices in Laboratories" developed by the consortium led by the Cámara de Comercio Italiana Barcelona. The general objective of this action is to promote the environmental sustainability of MSMEs in the laboratory sector, through the exchange of knowledge and experiences between European and Latin American organisations.
- Research proposal "Food contaminants in the circular economy: Metrology underpinning informed strategies for recycling of packaging and for food safety", developed by the consortium led by the Italian National Institute of Metrological Research (INRiM). The proposal focuses on supporting the critical evaluation of established methods and the development of new techniques for the identification and quantification of contaminants in selected food and food packaging matrices.



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#### **EUROLAB Members**





#### **EUROLAB Structure**



**President** Paolo Moscatti **ASSOTIC** 



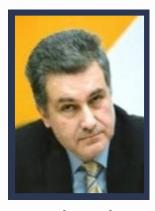
**Vice-President** Irache Visiers Sanz **EUROLAB Spain** 



**Vice-President** Alexander Šafařík-Pštrosz **EUROLAB-CZ** 



**Treasurer** Jean-Luc Laurent **EUROLAB France** 



**Board Member** Pericles Agathonos HellasLab



**Board Member** Ewa Bulska **POLLAB** 



**Board Member** Leif Madsen **EUROLAB Denmark** 



**Board Member** Álvaro Silva Ribeiro **RELACRE** 



**Board Member** Luc Scholtis Fenelab



Representative of **Associated Members** 

Ömer Güzel **TURKLAB** 



**TCQA Chair** Andreas Kinzel **EUROLAB Germany** 



#### **Conclusions**

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To fully benefit from EUROLAB's initiatives and partnerships, it's crucial to implement them at the national level, ensuring our member laboratories can take advantage of these resources. We also need to facilitate effective communication between EUROLAB and its member associations, allowing for a seamless exchange of information.

To achieve this, we must enhance EUROLAB's engagement with international stakeholders and foster closer collaboration with national associations. Recognising that EUROLAB's strength lies in its dedicated members, we are committed to a range of activities such as webinars, training sessions, and EU-funded projects to enrich our collective efforts.

This report provided a glimpse into recent EUROLAB activities, highlighting our ongoing collaboration. Let's strengthen our bonds, embrace new challenges, and shape the future of laboratories together as we move into the new year.

Paolo Moscatti, EUROLAB President

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EUROLAB is grateful to its Presidency and Board Members for all the valuable contributions and fruitful cooperation, while we look towards the future, with new ideas and new approaches.

EUROLAB would also like to express all the gratitude for the kind support and collaboration to all its members and stakeholders, while continuing our dialogue and joint work in promoting and enhancing the role and importance of the laboratory community to the safety and quality of life.

On behalf of EUROLAB, we look forward to a successful year ahead, with new opportunities and fruitful ideas to further develop and implement, bringing an added value to the laboratory community that EUROLAB represents.

MARCH 2024

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