
COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology which promotes and coordinates nationally-funded research in Europe. COST provides funds for research networks (Actions) and in this way helps consolidate European research investment and opens the European Research Area to cooperation worldwide. COST is solely funded from a specific part of the EU RTD Framework Programmes. The financial support that COST provides to Actions is used for coordination and networking activities, while the research itself is funded at national/EU level. In this way, COST reaches out to over 30 000 researchers across Europe and lever approximately EUR 2 billion of research funding, although its direct support is less than 1% of this sum.

One of the key scientific Domains that COST covers (out of total of nine) is the Domain of Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences (BMBS), which at the time of writing (May 2010) is funding a total of 29 Actions. Among these aiming to support development of European Research Area and increase and disseminate knowledge on lipid peroxidation, the COST B35 Action was launched in June 2006, being the first COST Action ever targeting this important field of molecular biosciences. COST B35 has provided a networking research platform for more than two hundred researchers from 26 European countries, USA, Japan and Canada and facilitated formation of interdisciplinary network involving 49 research teams (www.irb.hr/costb35). The COST B35 Action is structured according to its scientific objectives in four working groups: 1) Improvement of methods for the determination of LPO products; 2) Studies of the fundamental aspects of LPO; 3) Pathological aspects of LPO and 4) Development and validation of antioxidants. Researchers involved in these working groups have interacted in their research activities not only within the COST B35 Action but also within the entire European Research Area. One such activity was the conference on “Natural and Synthetic Antioxidants” organized by Work Group 4 of the Action in Rzeszów on September 25–26, 2010. Participants from 11 countries (Belarus, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Spain and Ukraine) shared their experience and plans with students and researchers from the “COST — Near Neighbor Countries” of the Eastern Europe. The program included 16 lectures, some of which were then prepared in the form of publications presented in this issue of Acta Biochimica Polonica. Since the researchers from the COST Action B35 have published more than two hundred joint papers in various journals during the period of four years, some research papers are included in this and in a forthcoming issue of Acta Biochimica Polonica as an additional collated source of results even though they had not been presented at the conference in Rzeszów, allowing a more detailed insight into the recent results of the COST B35 research collaborations. We hope that other researchers will appreciate this and make similar efforts within their field of research to collaborate through COST and further strengthen the European Research Area.

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