

## Dissolution of the Vanesa Tognetti Research Group

In October 2017, Junior Research Groups' evaluation was organized by experts from the International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) of the CEITEC consortium. Junior group leaders of CEITEC MU were evaluated with the aim to identify their preparedness to be promoted to the senior group leader position.

In the case of Research Group of Vanesa Tognetti, the ISAB did not recommended promotion to senior group leader position:

*Vanesa Tognetti joined CEITEC in August 2012 and was offered a start-up package of one Postdoc, a part-time PhD student and a technician. Upon arrival, the lab was empty and it took a long time to get the lab fully functioning. Between 2012 and 2014, she received approximately 700.000 EUR of competitive funding from international, as well as national funding agencies. However, in 2015-2017, no additional funding was obtained. Her current group consists of three PhD students, two lab managers, a lab technician and one senior researcher. During the last five years, Vanesa did not publish a single publication with original data from her own group. She contributed to a Plant Physiology paper of the Inzé Lab and dealt with work that was performed when she was a Postdoc in the group of Prof Frank Van Breusegem at VIB (Ghent, Belgium). Furthermore, Vanesa published two reviews, one in a T25 paper (Plant Cell and Environment) and one in a low- impact factor journal. This lack of original scientific output raised considerable concerns with the external reviewers and the ISAB.*

*The major research achievements and the vision for future research were very poorly defined. The general theme of how environmental cues cross-talk to plant and chloroplast development is highly interesting but virtually no information was given on how Vanesa would approach this. The external reviewers and the ISAB members were not able to find out what the major achievements were over the last five years. Also the plan and vision of her future research completely lacked any unifying grand concept and although some slides were shown during the oral presentation, the ISAB members could not obtain a clear view on her future research direction. Clearly, the research of Vanesa is lacking focus and her group performs research in very diverse aspects of plant biology, making it very difficult to finish coherent stories for publication. Besides studying ROS and auxins, she continues to work on flavodoxin technology (PhD work), ABC transporters (no details given) and phytoremediation (?). The ISAB members were also surprised that Vanessa will start to work on sunflower, although she has no experience with this crop at all.*

*The three referee reports raised considerable concerns on the performance and research vision of Vanesa and these detailed reports confirmed the view of the ISAB members that the past and future research of Vanesa does not fulfil the criteria of CEITEC to become a senior RGL.*

Under Article 11 (3, c) of the Rules of Organization of CEITEC MU, the Scientific Board is expected to give advice about any intent to establish or abolish a Research Group.

Therefore, with the advice from the Director's Board, the Scientific Board is hereby being requested opinion on the proposed organizational measure.

As intended, the Research Group would be abolished as an organizational unit within CEITEC MU as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, and the employment contract of the current Group Leader with the Institute would thereafter last under the terms of the contract, as currently valid, i.e. until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.