The Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology participates in major Horizon 2020 project, aiming to build European infrastructure to control insect vector - borne disease

Scientific approaches developed within Molecular Entomology and Bioinformatic groups at IMBB are exploited in a major recently awarded EU-Horizon2020 project (INFRAVEC2, duration 2017-2020, total budget 10M euros).

The goal of INFRAVEC2 is to develop robust infrastructure with capacity to respond to vector- borne disease epidemics (such as malaria and leishmaniasis, and viral infections - chikungunya, west Nile virus, dengue, Zika, and yellow fever, as well as important vector-borne veterinary diseases), which have historically been a problem of tropical countries, but now also represent a threat for temperate regions of the world including much of Europe.

The main objective of the project is to integrate key specialized research facilities necessary for European excellence in insect vector biology, open them for European access, and develop new vector control measures targeting the greatest threats to human health and animal industries. The consortium includes, Institute Pasteur and IRD (France), Imperial College and Pirbright Institute (UK), IRTA (Spain), FORTH (Greece), Radboud University and Wageningen University (Netherlands), Max Planck Institute (Germany), and the European Bioinformatics Institute-EMBL. The resources will be opened and publicized to European researchers, with the realistic expectation to consolidate European global leadership in insect vector biology.

The project will be led by **John Vontas** at IMBB, with main objective his studies on insecticide resistance mechanisms, with the participation of Prof. **Christos Louis** and Dr **Pantelis Topalis**.

“It is a very important research infrastructure project for vector borne diseases and public health, which promotes the international recognition of FORTH/IMBB and significantly contributes to the establishment of excellence in the field of vector borne disease”, **Nektarios Tavernarakis**, the Director of IMBB and Professor at the University of Crete, said.

Figure 1. The Tiger mosquito *Aedes albopictus*, a putative major vector of viral infections such as – dengue and Zika, which has invaded Europe in the last decade and expanded dramatically in many countries, including Greece, is a major target f INFRAVEC2.