



# The Experimental & Research Center of ELPEN

The largest productive pharmaceutical industry in Greece, with a strong international presence



## Article

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*"Life is the sum of all your choices"*  
A. Camus

*"Love responsibility. Say: It is my duty, and mine alone, to save the earth. If it is not saved, then I alone am to blame."*  
N. Kazantzakis

*"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."*  
Aristotle

It was the winter of 1995. We had been talking about a crisis, for many years in our country – an economic and social crisis, an employment crisis, even an ethical. Indeed, a crisis – not just problems – did exist back then. It existed even before that time, and, unfortunately, it also persisted afterwards. Yet, had the Greek people been able to comprehend what a crisis truly means, 20 years ago, had we been able to see ahead of us in the future, then perhaps we wouldn't have ended up where we are. The current situation is the sum of a country's choices.

In the winter of 1995, two men, who had not aimed at meeting each other, were nonetheless brought together by fate. Through an ordinary visit, they finally met, and a long-lasting collaboration began – one, which brought about great changes and twists. Despite their thirty years of age difference, they understood each other, as if they were friends and same-year graduates. Those men were **Mr. Dimitrios Pentafragas**, Founder and Chairman of ELPEN, and myself. In May 1996, ELPEN's Experimental & Research Center was founded. Today, 19,5 years later, ELPEN is the largest productive pharmaceutical industry in our country, with a prominent international presence. On the same time, ELPEN's Experimental & Research Center is the largest Greek laboratory of applied and translational research and education in the field of biomedicine, with numerous international collaborations.

We have taken over a great responsibility: to realize all that we thought of and considered as righteous for our country. This included the active participation of the productive industry in research, but also the development of creative and substantial partnerships between the public and private sectors (that is, what actually takes place in all developed countries). However, this was something utterly un conceivable for Greece. Should we fail, it would have been our fault. But we loved that responsibility, and we still do.

Did we have any magic recipe? No, none. If life recipes existed, then we would implement them straight away. What we have is principles and values – provided, of course, that we trust them. Success came after a lot of hard work. It was built, one stone at a time. A long stairway constantly grew, step by step.

Each collaboration entrenched our relationship of trust and mutual respect, and, in its turn, this established the foundations for the next step. From some point onwards, though, these partnerships, these wholes, started having significant dynamics and major added values. The whole became greater than the mere sum of its parts.

## Research and education sector

Our growth course continues in the future as well, in both the research and the educational sector. Our research encompasses many medical and other scientific specialties – surgery, pathology, clinically/laboratory-oriented and many more.

Applied/translational biomedical research is a very large "family", covering numerous areas, such as: Medicine, Dental Medicine, Nursing, Biology, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmaceutical Science, Chemistry, Engineering, Materials Science, Nutritional Sciences, Biochemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics, etc. Accordingly, the infrastructure and equipment must not only follow the needs for carrying out research, but they should also be constantly modernized. This is what happens, indeed. Organizing and mastering all activities demands a good coordination of human resources, needs and external factors. In other words, it requires experience, as well as administrative capacities – and this is, in fact, our case.

Many times, the following question arises: what is the most important element of an organization? What is that one particular component,

which makes all the difference? Which single constituent would one take along with him, were he to choose between those to be left behind and those to be carried along, especially within a highly sensitive sector, like ours? The answer is clear: human resources – the education, international certifications, experience, conduct and devotion of our people. Simply put, all those elements, which were recently described in a particularly appraising letter of acknowledgement we received by Denmark, in honor of our 3-year long international partnership in education. Ambassadors of Greece: this is what they represent.

## 100 fellowships

Since September, 2011, all of our research collaborations are Fellowships of the Experimental & Research Center of ELPEN Pharmaceutical Industry. By now, we have exceeded 100 fellowships, many of which include collaborations with universities in Europe and the USA. Our educational programs have an international character and are globally recognized. Greek scientists, domestic and international scientific companies have embraced the Center, with affection and trust. The results are impressive: scientists' training in established as well as novel techniques, updating of their theoretical background, development of their clinical and other skills, familiarization and use of new technologies, conversation and exchange of experiences, and international promotion of the work performed by Greek scientists. All in all, our numbers and results speak for themselves.

## SIGNIFICANT WORK

ELPEN's Experimental & Research Center is living proof of what it means to overturn all myths; it embodies the idea of substantial and productive collaboration between the public and private sectors, but also the faith in principles and values, which bring about progress, to the benefit of science and society.

SCIENTIFIC WORK AND ACTIVITIES	RESULTS
Publications in international scientific journals	226
Announcements in international scientific conferences	320
Publications in Greek scientific journals	78
Announcements in Greek scientific conferences	350
Awards by Greek and international scientific entities	150
Lectures/Talks	>300
Organization of educational events	>700
PhD theses and Master's degrees	300
Publications	15 books & publications
Organization of educational visits at our premises (production and research up until 2013)	700 visits 11,000 visitors