

EMBO and Chinese Academy of Sciences join efforts in the area of the life sciences

The European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) have signed an agreement to enhance collaboration with each other over the next two years. This is the first cooperation agreement with another scientific organization that EMBO has signed during its 40 years of existence. It is designed to support life science researchers from China and Europe who wish to cooperate through fellowships and joint meetings.

The significance of this agreement is two-fold. First of all, it consolidates our working relationship with the Chinese scientific community and secondly, it shows that EMBO is actively building links with scientific organizations throughout the world". says Frank Gannon, EMBO Executive Director Under their new agreement, both EMBO and CAS, will encourage researchers from China and Europe to enter into or intensify scientific collaborations with each other in the field of life sciences.

To ensure that such co-operation will be beneficial to the development of science in Europe and China, the two organizations will identify priority areas for mutual aid with a view to establishing at least one large research project.

"The Chinese Academy of Sciences, the highest organization of natural sciences in China and a major player in the Chinese scientific community is pleased to see the signing of this agreement. It will open new possibilities for Chinese-European co-operation. This holds especially true for young life scientists on both sides," says Chen Zhu, Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Last year EMBO added a medium-term fellowship scheme directed at scientists from emerging economies to its portfolio. As part of the new agreement, two such fellowships will be awarded to young Chinese scientists from CAS laboratories. This will allow Chinese life science researchers to visit European laboratories for six to nine months periods. In return, the Chinese Academy of Sciences has agreed to fund visits of young European researchers to Chinese laboratories for two weeks to six months. "These visits will allow scientists to establish new collaborations and enhance existing partnerships between European and Chinese laboratories," explains Mary Gannon, EMBO World Programme Manager.

Together, EMBO and CAS are working towards setting up a recognised screening process for Chinese life science researchers who wish to visit European laboratories. "It is important for Chinese scientists who apply to European laboratories to be correctly evaluated. This is the only way we can ensure that the visiting scientists and the host laboratory will mutually benefit from their interactions with each other," says Mary Gannon.

Building on the scientific co-operation that has been ongoing with China since 1998, CAS and EMBO will organize joint scientific events such as workshops and practical courses. These events will be similar to the meetings currently running under the EMBO Courses and Workshop Programme in Europe. Over the years, these have proven to be very successful in training young scientists and establishing research contacts.

The two organizations have agreed to review their collaboration within two years. If the measures taken prove successful and beneficial for both sides, the agreement will be renewed in 2004 and every two years thereafter.

Press Contacts

<p>Ellen Peerenboom (PhD) EMBO Press & Public Relations Officer Communication & Web Postfach 102240 D69012 Heidelberg Germany. Tel: + 49 6221 8891 108 Fax: + 49 6221 8891 200 ellen.peerenboom@embo.org</p>	<p>Mary Gannon EMBO World Programme Manager Tel: 0049 6221 8891 104 mary.gannon@embo.org</p>
---	---