



Joint Press Release

For immediate release

A milestone in the history of three partners EMBO, EMBC and EMBL celebrate their anniversaries

Heidelberg, November 10, 2004 – Three leading European life science organisations based in Heidelberg, Germany will celebrate important anniversaries at a joint event on November 15. The European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) was established 40 years ago, the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC) is 35 years old, and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) turns 30.

To mark these anniversaries, the organisations and their staff have invited prominent scientists, policy-makers and political authorities to participate in a reflection on the future of life sciences in Europe. Celebrations will take place at Mannheim's Rosengarten, where guests will also be treated to a banquet dinner with musical interludes.

The joint event symbolises the close cooperative relationship and the common history of the organisations. In the 1960's, scientists from across Europe expressed a great interest in establishing an international laboratory for molecular biology; at the same time they recognised an urgent need for more international training and scientific exchanges. In 1964, EMBO was created to answer these needs and strengthen molecular biology research throughout Europe. EMBO's initial activities included providing fellowships for European scientists and laying the groundwork for a European laboratory. The EMBC was founded five years later as an inter-governmental organisation to bring together European governments to provide stable funding for EMBO's fellowship and training programmes. In 1974, their joint efforts culminated in the signing of an inter-governmental treaty to establish the laboratory (EMBL).

Since its foundation, EMBO has become recognised as one of the foremost life sciences organisations in Europe. Today, with the support of

EMBC's 24 member states, EMBO offers a highly respected programme of activities throughout Europe and beyond promoting research, training, career development, mobility, publication standards, communication and networking.

Today EMBL is one of the leading research institutes in the world, with over 1300 staff members working at five campuses in four countries. In addition to carrying out top molecular biology research, EMBL conducts advanced training including a prestigious international PhD programme, provides key services to scientists in its 17 member states and across Europe, is deeply engaged in transferring the products of basic research to industry, and has an extensive outreach programme.

"The three organisations together have a fantastic record in promoting excellence in the life sciences across Europe," notes EMBL's Director-General Prof. Fotis C. Kafatos. "Today these sciences hold immense promise for understanding all living systems and improving the human condition. Thus the missions of our three organisations are more important than ever, and over the decades we have demonstrated that the international, interdisciplinary, open style of the 'EMB' family is a great recipe for doing exceptional science."

"This landmark occasion is as much about the present and the future as it is about the past," comments Frank Gannon, Executive Director of EMBO and Secretary General of EMBC. "It not only marks the combined role of EMBO, EMBC and EMBL in the transformation of the life sciences in Europe but also looks ahead to the continued impact of all three organisations on the current European research environment and the advancement of quality-driven research in Europe." ●



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About EMBO/EMBC

The European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) promotes the biosciences in Europe. The organisation supports transnational mobility, training and exchange at all stages of the scientific career through initiatives such as fellowships, courses and workshops. Founded in 1964, an example of EMBO's early impact was the establishment of the well-known laboratory, EMBL. EMBO elects new members annually on the basis of proven excellence in research. Today the organization has approximately 1200 members in Europe and 100 associate members worldwide including some 38 Nobel Laureates. EMBO activities are funded by the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC), an intergovernmental organisation made up of 24 member states.

About EMBL:

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory is a basic research institute funded by public research monies from 17 member states, including most of the EU, Switzerland and Israel. Research at EMBL is conducted by approximately 80 independent groups covering the spectrum of molecular biology. The Laboratory has five units: the main Laboratory in Heidelberg, and Outstations in Hinxton (the European Bioinformatics Institute), Grenoble, Hamburg, and Monterotondo near Rome. The cornerstones of EMBL's mission are: to perform basic research in molecular biology, to train scientists, students and visitors at all levels, to offer vital services to scientists in the member states, and to develop new instruments and methods in the life sciences. EMBL's international PhD Programme has a student body of about 170. The Laboratory also sponsors an active Science and Society programme. Visitors from the press and public are welcome. The 17 EMBL Member States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

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