

## New training and conference centre for the life sciences at EMBL in Heidelberg

The German Minister for Education and Research officially opens the EMBL Advanced Training Centre – Funding comes from the German Ministry for Education and Research, the Klaus Tschira Foundation, the federal state of Baden-Württemberg and EMBL's member states

**Heidelberg, 9 March 2010** – Today, the German Minister for Education and Research, Annette Schavan, officially opens the new training and conference centre for the life sciences on the campus of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg.

“This new centre in Heidelberg will form a central European platform where scientists from different countries, disciplines and generations can meet to exchange ideas and their best practices,” says Minister Schavan.

“Up to 6,000 course and conference participants will gather at the EMBL Advanced Training Centre annually and make it the prime hub for the international life sciences elite,” says Iain Mattaj, EMBL Director General.

With its auditorium for an audience of 450 people and a large display area for the presentation of scientific posters the EMBL Advanced Training Centre offers unique conditions for scientific conferences and events. For the education of young scientists, the centre offers cutting-edge facilities like teaching laboratories and computer training rooms.

Financial support for the building project came from the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) that contributed 14 million Euro, the Klaus Tschira Foundation with 10 million Euro and the federal state of Baden-Württemberg with one million Euro, complemented by the contribution of the EMBL member states.

The architecture of the building is inspired by the structure of the double helix, the carrier of genetic information, DNA. With a total space of around 17,000 square metres, the building offers an excellent infrastructure for courses and conferences and convenient rooms and facilities for public events, teacher training and visitors. About 80 staff members from administration and scientific management use the office space.

“Scientists never really complete their education; there are always new things to learn. This is why our foundation is especially concerned with training projects and the promotion of young talents,” says Klaus Tschira, whose foundation supports



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The new EMBL Advanced Training Centre in Heidelberg, Germany.

the natural sciences, computer science and mathematics. “The transparent architecture not only offers ideal functional conditions, but also creates an inspiring learning and working atmosphere for scientists and the public alike.” Klaus Tschira himself developed the first design of the building, now brought to fruition by architects Bernhardt + Partner from Darmstadt.

In the life sciences, continuous training and scientific exchange are the key to success. Together with conducting excellent basic research and providing cutting-edge infrastructure and services to the scientific community in the member states, advanced training is one of EMBL's core missions.

The extensive expertise of EMBL and its sister organisation, the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO), form an ideal basis for the success of the EMBL Advanced Training Centre. The new centre will also benefit from the excellent scientific infrastructure and existing academic, institutional and industrial networks of the Rhine-Neckar region. In the future, industrial partners enrolled in the EMBL Corporate Partnership Programme will also support conferences and events at the institute. ●

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## **About EMBL**

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory is a basic research institute funded by public research monies from 20 member states (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and associate member state Australia. Research at EMBL is conducted by approximately 85 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; to develop new instruments and methods in the life sciences and to actively engage in technology transfer activities. EMBL's International PhD Programme has a student body of about 190. The Laboratory also sponsors an active Science and Society programme. Visitors from the press and public are welcome.

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