

# **EU supports international network on primate research**

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## **EUPRIM-Net receives seven million Euros**

**For biological and biomedical research, science depends on animal experiments. The understanding of complex processes in the body such as, for example, the reaction of the immune system to certain viruses or the control of brain functions sometimes also requires experiments with monkeys, the so-called non-human primates. EUPRIM-Net, a network consisting of eight European research centers, faces up to the special challenges of research with these animals. Under the leadership of the German Primate Center (DPZ) in Göttingen, Germany, EUPRIM-Net wants to advance the standards and methods of husbandry and breeding of primates, support the education in this area and to reduce the number of animal experiments by an increased exchange of samples. The EU will sponsor the continuation of this project, which was initiated in 2006, with seven million Euros for the next four years.**

“New scientific knowledge from research with primates is an integral basis for advances in the fields of medicine, biology and biotechnology. It therefore contributes to keep our health on a high level and to develop new therapies,” Stefan Treue, Director of the German Primate Center (DPZ) and spokesman of EUPRIM-Net said. Research makes use of various methods, including animal experiments. Owing to their closeness to human beings as regards genetics and behavioral biology, primates occupy a special position in this context. They are only used for experimental purposes if alternative methods are not available. Research with animals follows the 3R (“Refinement“, “Reduction“, “Replacement“) principle. This means that efforts have to be made to improve the experimental methods in order to reduce the number of animals used and that if possible, alternative methods are to be developed and employed.

This is the starting point for the European network EUPRIM-Net. Under DPZ leadership, eight primate institutions from six countries joined together in the year 2006. “We wanted to combine the competences of the individual institutions, refine and unify standards for the keeping, breeding and caring of the primates and thus ensure that experimental research with primates in Europe conforms with highest standards ,“ Stefan Treue said.

Owing to the great success of EUPRIM-Net, the EU will provide additional subsidies to the total amount of seven million Euros from 2011 to 2015. The network shall be supplemented by additional primate institutions and partners from the industrial sector and extended beyond European borders in future.

It is the aim of joint research projects to optimize and standardize husbandry and breeding of the animals as well as diagnosis and treatment of their diseases. The participating centers offer European research cost-free access to their bio banks, that is to their collections of DNA, tissue and blood samples as well as to their method inventory. In this way, new research approaches are possible and the number of animal experiments can be reduced. An important matter of concern for EUPRIM-Net is the training of technical and scientific staff with regard to the biology of primates and how to handle them in human care. For this purpose, several international advanced trainings have already been carried out and a DVD on primate training was produced and distributed to more than 100 research institutions.

Another emphasis in EUPRIM-Net is put on the investigation of methods, which could be employed as an alternative to animal experiments. “Experiments with primates will be irreplaceable for foreseeable times, however, our research contributes to the development of alternatives,” Stefan Treue said.

From 23 to 25 November 2010 an international meeting will take place at the German Primate Center in order to discuss joint research projects.

Additional information about EUPRIM-Net at: <http://www.euprim-net.eu>

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The Press and Public Relations Department can provide you with printable pictures. Please send us evidence in case of publication.

The German Primate Center (Deutsches Primatenzentrum, DPZ) / Leibniz Institute for Primate Research in Göttingen, Germany, does basic research on and with primates in the areas of organismic biology, infection research and neurosciences. In addition, the Center has five field stations abroad and is competence and reference center for all issues relating to research on and with primates. The DPZ is one of the 86 research and infrastructure institutions within the Leibniz Community (<http://www.wgl.de/>).



