

alumni

DEUTSCHES KREBSFORSCHUNGSZENTRUM

4th Meeting of Alumni DKFZ in Heidelberg, June 18-19, 2010



The new solar ship on the Neckar River is powered by the energy of the sun. The passengers experience the most delightful views of the city while the ship gently and quietly glides by.

Dear DKFZ Alumni and Friends,

This newsletter is focused on two main topics: 1) European connections in funding and promotion of cancer research, and 2) the program of the 4th General Meeting of our Alumni Association and the Alumni of the Life Science Lab. The meeting will be preceded by the 3rd Polish-German Cancer Workshop.

The situation of funding and promotion of cancer research in the European Union is explained by Dr Susan Kentner, the representative of the Helmholtz Association in Bruxelles, and by Professor Anne-Lise Børresen-Dale, President of the European Association for Cancer Research.

The 4th General Alumni Meeting in Heidelberg starts on Friday, June 18. It is devoted to topics to which DKFZ Alumni have made outstanding contributions (see pages 8 to 10): The significance

of differentiation markers and apoptotic pathways for cancer diagnosis and treatment, and the relationship of infection and cancer, highlighted by the Nobel Laureate for Medicine 2008, Harald zur Hausen. On Saturday, June 19, public relations and patient information in cancer will be discussed, including the recent promotion of the Cancer Information Service of DKFZ to a national reference center. New scientific developments will be outlined by leading experts. All young scientists are invited to present their most recent results in a poster competition. In place of the traditional Friday Lecture of the Life Science Lab, a special lecture on the art of exploring the unknown will be given. Attractive social events including a reception by the DKFZ Management Board and a guided tour with the solar boat on the river Neckar will complement the scientific program.

The newsletter also contains reports on several international and regional events, namely a workshop of scientists from the DKFZ and the Japanese National Cancer Center in Tokyo, a meeting of Russian and German geneticists in Saint Petersburg, a reception for Alumni and friends of DKFZ in Denver, and excursions of guest scientists to Merck Pharma in Darmstadt, and Fresenius SE in Bad Homburg.

Of particular interest is an article on a very successful regatta organized by the National Center for Tumor Diseases to support the promising new approach to improve the treatment of cancer patients by all sorts of sports activities. The regular report by a guest scientist in our newsletter has been contributed by a colleague from Bulgaria this time, promoted by both the DAAD and the Humboldt Foundation in the early steps of her academic career. Last but not least, I would like to draw your attention to an article outlining the political situation in Germany after the recent elections.

On behalf of the Board of the Alumni Association, I cordially invite all Alumni and current scientists from DKFZ, the University of Heidelberg, and other related scientific institutions to participate in the 4th General Alumni Meeting. Looking forward to seeing many of you in Heidelberg in June 2010, I remain
With kind regards,

Peter Bannasch

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EU Funding for Research and Technological Development

by Susan Kentner

Global challenges such as ageing societies, therapies for chronic diseases, a sustainable energy supply and climate change cannot be tackled by EU countries on their own, but can only be accomplished successfully at the European level. EU funding thus acts as a powerful catalyst to mobilize efforts in research and technological development (RTD).

Why does the European Union fund research?

The European research funding programmes arose out of scientific and technological challenges posed by the USA, the USSR, and Japan in the 1960s and 1970s. Europe acutely felt the need to mobilize its own RTD in order to hold its own in the global economy and guarantee prosperity and a high standard of living for its citizens.

European RTD funding is anchored in the EC Treaties, with the objectives of

strengthening the scientific and technological basis of European industry, increasing its competitiveness in the global economy, and supporting other EU policy areas such as energy, environment, health and space. Over the years, other arguments reinforcing the rationale for research funding at the European level have been added, such as exploiting fully the potential of the European internal market, overcoming the fragmentation of European research, strengthening economic and social bonds among the Member States, and providing a framework for strategic research activities of such large cost and scale that they require collaborative efforts that cannot be realized by individual Member States.

In any case, an essential criterion for justifying research funding at the European level is the notion of European Added Value, or creating value above and beyond that achieved by research efforts at the national or regional level.

Framework Programme 6 (FP6) added the new objective of structuring and strengthening the foundations of the European Research Area (ERA), which is conceived as an “internal market” for RTD, allowing for the free exchange of knowledge and mobility of research personnel throughout Europe. RTD is thus seen as an essential motor for economic growth and enhancement of living standards in Europe. The Lisbon Treaty will provide even broader justification for RTD activities aimed at reinforcing the ERA.

Impact of RTD funding at the European level

In the 25 years since the first framework programme, funding of RTD at the European level has grown steadily, both financially and in terms of social and economic impact. At first glance, this observation might seem paradoxical. Since FP1 was adopted in 1983, EU research funding has expanded from 24.93 million Euro¹ annually to an average of 7.76 billion Euro annually in FP7 (2007 to 2013). However, EU research funding programmes amount to only around 5 percent of the entire EU budget, and the EU-27 expends only 1.84 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on RTD, although this figure varies widely among the Member States. Moreover, the EU framework programmes account for only about 5 percent of all public research funding in the EU-27; some 95 percent of research expenditures are financed at the national level and through private sources such as industry². In comparison, the 2009 budgets for the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health are US Dollar 6.85 billion and US Dollar 30.5 billion, respectively.

Clearly, the impact of the EU research framework programmes owes less to the level of financing than to their structuring effects on the European research ecosystem as a whole. At the

¹ For the sake of simplicity, EUR is used here, although the ECU (European Currency Unit) was used as the unit of account for European currencies until the euro replaced it at parity on January 1, 1999.

² Key Figures 2007: Towards a European Research Area – Science, Technology and Innovation, European Communities, 2007



moment, the framework programmes represent the only truly comprehensive programme at the European level, in the sense that they allow all 27 EU Member States and the 12 Associated Countries direct and equal access to research funding³. In the process the framework programmes have contributed to the development of key European industries, stimulated the formation of European research networks, and strengthened the knowledge and research infrastructure throughout Europe⁴.

Health research in FP7

The health programme in FP7 addresses the issues of improving the health of European citizens and increasing the com-



petitiveness of European health-related industries, with an emphasis on translational research and global health issues, e. g. emerging epidemics. The program comprises three main areas:

- Biotechnology, generic tools and technologies for health (high-throughput research; detection, diagnosis, monitoring; development and validation of parameters, tools, methods and standards for predicting the safety and efficacy of therapies; innovative therapeutic approaches such as gene and cell therapy, regenerative medicine, immunotherapy and vaccines)
- Translating research for human health (integrating biological data and processes, large-scale data gathering, systems biology; research on the brain and neurodegenerative diseases, ageing; major infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB, antimicrobial drug resistance, emerging epidemics; cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity, rare diseases, other chronic diseases)
- Optimizing the delivery of health care to citizens (translating clinical research into clinical practice; quality, efficiency and solidarity of health care systems; enhanced health promotion and disease prevention)

How has the Helmholtz Association benefited?

The research centres of the Helmholtz Association have been active participants in the EU research framework programmes since their inception, and EU funding has become an increasingly important source of third-party funding. Since the beginning of FP6 in 2002, the total funds acquired annually by the Helmholtz centres through the EU have more than doubled. In the area of health research, annual EU funding has increased 2.5-fold since 2002. Thus far in FP7 DKFZ has received 9.1 million Euro in funding.

In the first 3 years of FP7, the Helmholtz research centres acquired a total of over 185.8 million Euro in funding (not counting the Euratom programme), primarily in projects for collaborative research or European research infrastructures. In 2008, EU funding amounted to roughly 12 percent of total third-party funding for the Helmholtz Association, and the proportion of Helmholtz scientists currently involved in EU projects is conservatively estimated to be around 10 to 12 percent. In addition, Helmholtz research centres are involved in 19 of 44 projects for the development of European research infrastructures on the ESFRI road map and are co-ordinating seven of these.

Looking ahead to FP8

Although FP8 will not begin until 2014, the debate about its priorities and themes is already under way. The European Commission has the right of initiative to table a proposal for the new framework programme, which must then be debated and adopted by both the European Parliament and the Council. This is a lengthy process, usually lasting up to two years and involving consultations with both national governments and stakeholders. Long before the initial proposal is published, the Commission seeks the opinions of stakeholders all over Europe on the thematic priorities and activities of the next framework programme.

In the weeks to come, a Commissioner for Research will be appointed to the new College of Commissioners under President José Manuel Barroso. This event as well as the mid-term review of FP7 to be conducted in 2010 will kick off an intense debate preceding the Commission's proposal (probably mid-2011) and continuing until adoption of FP8 in the latter half of 2013. The current financial crisis will undoubtedly influence the setting of EU priorities, including RTD, in the next EU budget (2014-2020). Efforts to further establish the ERA will require even more co-ordination and consultation between the EU and the 27 Member States and almost certainly affect national research agendas. All these factors suggest that the members of the scientific community should play an active role in shaping the future of European research by formulating their own research priorities and strategies and participating in the ongoing political debate.

Dr Susan Kentner is Director of the Brussels office of the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres.

³ COST (Cooperation in Science and Technology), with 35 member countries, provides funding for networking activities on a much smaller scale. The European Science Foundation (ESF), with 80 member organizations in 30 countries, offers funding to scientists whose national funding organizations have provided financing.

⁴ For an analysis of Framework Programme 6, see Report of the Expert Group led by E. Th. Rietschel, Evaluation of the Sixth Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development, 2009

Europe Promotion of Cancer Research across Europe

by Anne-Lise Børresen-Dale



Anne-Lise Børresen-Dale presents the 2009 EACR Young Cancer Researcher Award to Fabrizio d'Adda di Fagagna from Milan.

The European Association for Cancer Research (EACR) celebrated its 40th Anniversary last year. As a member society for researchers, our Association has always had one guiding aim: "The advancement of cancer research". In pursuing this aim, the Association provides services to members, presents educational, training and scientific meeting opportunities, and facilitates communication and collaboration between the cancer researchers who make up its membership. It also sets out to raise the profile of cancer research and cancer researchers in Europe and the need for sustained political and economic support.

The Association's membership has grown very rapidly in recent years and we expect to number 10,000 by the time of our next main conference. I am delighted that EACR-21 is being held in my home city of Oslo at the end of June 2010 and will build on the great success of the last year's meeting in Lyon. The EACR bi-annual conference still sits at the very centre of our activities and we set out to provide the very best meeting possible with outstanding international speakers, well focused symposia, educational workshops and opportunities to exchange ideas with experts in various fields of cancer research. Young researchers are an important part of the conference and they are encouraged to present their work both through the poster sessions and in the 'Presidential Sessions' where the authors of the most impressive abstracts are invited to speak. In order to facilitate the participation of students and "early career" researchers in the conference, EACR has again increased the level of bursary funding. This should support the participation of between forty and fifty applicants.



EACR travel fellowships have become increasingly popular over the last two years and the quality of applications is particularly high. This has required a steady growth of the available budget as the Association has tried to support all high quality applications. Reports from fellowship winners are published in the EACR Newsletter and Year Book each April and can also be read by visitors to the Association's website. There is no doubt that a period of working in a new context, in a centre of excellence, is of great encouragement to researchers.

EACR's new initiative to provide highly focused meetings saw successful Sym-

posia on "Chromatin and Cancer", "Transcription and Cancer", and "Inflammation and Cancer" this summer/fall. The 'Inflammation' meeting followed the ECCO 15 – 34 ESMO congress in Berlin where EACR members recognized the impact of the Association on the scientific programme: The basic science and translational "tracks" offered much of interest for members. As a sponsoring agency, EACR also supports important scientific meetings and symposia organized in Europe, publicizes these meetings and ultimately publishes informative follow-up reports.

Members are very positive about the quality of EACR communications, valuing the Annual Newsletter which has developed to become the Association's "Year Book", the e-mail news bulletin and an increasingly sophisticated website. EACR has grown quickly through the interest of individual members but most rapidly through the affiliation of member societies across Europe. There are now ten such member societies, with the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Experimentelle Krebsforschung (AEK) der Deutschen Krebsgesellschaft being one of the largest and longest standing. EACR members are now represented on the newly constituted EACR Council by AEK Spokesman, Professor Reinhold Schäfer, and we look forward to working increasingly closely with the AEK.

EACR also finds a political voice as a founder member of the European Cancer Organisation (ECCO), is involved in the development of the Academy of Cancer Sciences, and is delivering a work package as part of the Eurocancercoms project. All in all, EACR has a lot to offer, welcomes the active involvement of its members – old and new – and is keen to respond to their needs and interests.

For more information about membership and meetings visit the website www.eacr.org

Prof. Anne-Lise Børresen-Dale is Head of the Department of Genetics at the Institute for Cancer Research, Oslo University Hospital Radiumhospitalet in Norway. She became President of the EACR in 2008.

collaboration

White Nights in Saint Petersburg by Anne Blumrich

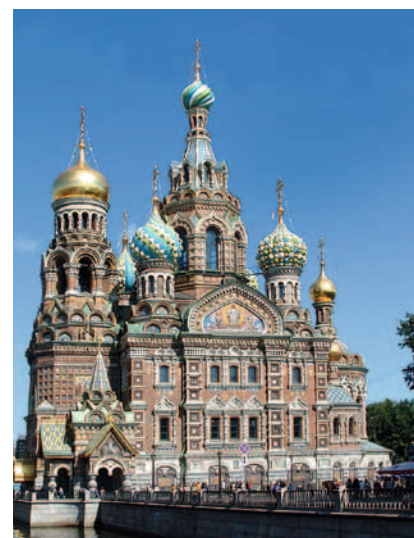
In September 2007, the Helmholtz Association got involved with the Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Group, funding young ambitious German and Russian scientists with a budget of 150,000 Euros per year. Professor Manfred Schwab, Head of the Division of Tumor Genetics at the German Cancer Research Center in Heidelberg, and Professor Evgeny N. Imyanitov, Group Leader at the Petrov Institute of Oncology in Saint Petersburg, started this research cooperation on allelic imbalances, gene amplification and microsatellite instability in bilateral breast cancer (biBC). It dates back to the early nineties and has meanwhile resulted in several successful publications.

Bilateral carcinomas, arising in the same body, share key components of natural history of tumor pathogenesis such as the genetic background, environmental exposures and metabolic peculiarities. It is of great interest to reveal whether this sharing results in concordance of genetic profiles within tumor pairs and whether host factors influence the pattern of its molecular pathogenesis. Therefore, biBC patients appear to be a highly demonstrative group for the case-control studies of breast cancer predisposing alleles.

Since April 2008, Russian and German scientists have been working together on investigating essential pathways of breast cancer pathogenesis and the identification of new genetic biomarkers of breast cancer susceptibility. Manfred Schwab had visited the Petrov Institute of Oncology already in 2004, and several Russian scientists have stayed at DKFZ for further research training since then. "Certainly collaboration can only work if there is a good and intense communication", stresses Larissa Savelyeva, project leader at DKFZ.

Recently, in June 2009, when it was the time of the "White nights" (i. e. the time of year when it doesn't get dark during the night), our group of six German scientists met the colleagues in Saint Petersburg again for several days to exchange latest results, experience and to strengthen their personal relationships. The warm and friendly welcome by Evgeny Imyanitov made it an easy start for both sides. Many things have dramatically improved at the Petrov Institute of Oncology since 2004. The Imyanitov laboratory has become a team not only working ambitiously in breast cancer research, but also gaining a great reputation in diagnostics in Russia. "It is amazing how things develop over here", confirms Manfred Schwab, who vividly remembers the situation in 2004.

The scientific talks on breast cancer and lively discussions were highly appreciated by all participants and thus the latest news on gene expression patterns or gene amplification in bilateral breast cancer was only one of the topics. The FRAGILOME project, initiated by Larissa Savelyeva, proved to be of particular in-



terest. This hardly explored field aims at unravelling cancer-associated genomic damage and thereby leading to new biomarkers for clinical cancer management. One basic aspect of this project is the determination of the full repertoire of common fragile sites (cFS) in the human genome. This approach fits very well into approaches within the framework of the current international project "Cancer Genome".

Even during dinner, when traditional Russian food, such as "Bortsch" or "Pellmeni" was on the menu, discussions on scientific aspects were continued. During these five days our group of visitors not only experienced the generous hospitality of the Russian research colleagues, but also took the opportunity to become familiar with Saint Petersburg, a city of five million inhabitants, which recently celebrated its 300th anniversary. The fascinating world of the tsars offers many cultural highlights, including the Hermitage and the Amber Room. It was evidently the well balanced mixture of social, cultural and scientific exchange that made this stay so successful.



Participants of the Helmholtz-Russia Joint Research Group. Dr Evgeny Suspitsin, Dr Kai Henrich, Prof. Manfred Schwab, Dr Larissa Savelyeva, Prof. Evgeny N. Imyanitov, Anne Blumrich, Lena Brückner, Dr Alexander V. Togo, Diana Ibragimova (from left to right)

Reception at AACR Meetings 2009 and 2010

During the 100th Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in Denver, Colorado, the DKFZ Management Board and the Alumni Association held a reception at the Hyatt Regency at the Colorado Convention Center on Monday, 20 April, 2009. A nice turnout of current scientists, alumni, and guests joined Professor Otmar D. Wiestler and Professor Peter Banasch who welcomed us to celebrate a successful year of achievements and collaborations and to plan for future events. Professor Wiestler gave a presentation on the recent developments at DKFZ, including the appointments of new division heads, awards to DKFZ Scientists including the 2008 Nobel prize to Professor Harald zur Hausen, and the inauguration of a 7-Tesla MRI facility, while everyone enjoyed a nice selection of German beers, California wines, and other refreshments.

As introduced in previous editions of this newsletter, we wish to build and support an American DKFZ Alumni Club and welcome any DKFZ Alumna or Alumnus currently working or living in the US. The purpose of the club is to promote the exchange of ideas, contacts, and collaborations between the US and DKFZ. We hope you would like to join us and please tell your colleagues who might be interested! We also cordially invite EVERYONE to join us at the Reception of the DKFZ Management Board and the Alumni Association on Monday evening, April 19, 2010, at the 101st AACR meeting in Washington, DC, and sincerely hope for an enthusiastic turnout and lively exchange. Please contact us (Laura Nelson: lnelson@mdanderson.org; or Ilia Toshkov: itoshkov@cblolabs.com), with your names, addresses, and suggestions if you are interested in joining either the Alumni Club and/or the AACR Reception. We hope to see you there!

Laura Nelson,
University of Texas M. D. Anderson
Cancer Center, Houston, Texas

workshop

Stimulating Days in Tokyo

by Michael Boutros

After several highly successful meetings with our Japanese colleagues in previous years, a delegation led by Professor Otmar Wiestler, Scientific Member and Chairman of the DKFZ Management Board, travelled East to Tokyo for a workshop on current topics of cancer research. The meeting at the National Cancer Center provided an excellent forum for presentations on novel findings in cancer research followed by lively scientific discussions, it strengthened existing research collaborations and built new bridges between cancer researchers in Japan and Germany.



The twelve-strong delegation from DKFZ was welcomed with extraordinary hospitality at the National Cancer Center in Tokyo. During the two days new issues for mutual collaboration were identified.

The workshop was opened by Professor Setsuo Hirohashi, the President of the National Cancer Center (NCC) in Tokyo, who warmly welcomed the participants and gave an overview of the center and its research and clinical activities. Professor Keiji Wakabayashi, the Director of the NCC Research Institute then started the intense two days of scientific talks on current topics in cancer research.

The meeting covered a broad spectrum of basic and translational research projects. Speakers from both Japan and Germany presented recent results on epigenetic regulation and consequences of deregulation in cancer, the identification of novel cancer susceptibility genes by genome-wide association studies, and mechanisms and pathophysiology of cancer cachexia. We also heard scientific talks on new mechanisms underlying angiogenesis and epithelial-

mesenchymal transitions and genomic and epigenomic approaches to identify factors that underlie tumorigenesis. Moreover, the progress on clinical treatments of pancreatic cancer was discussed in several presentations. After the scientific sessions, the group from DKFZ got the opportunity for individual exchange with Japanese colleagues and a visit to NCC laboratories for further discussions.

On the last day of the conference, Professor Keiji Wakabayashi and Professor

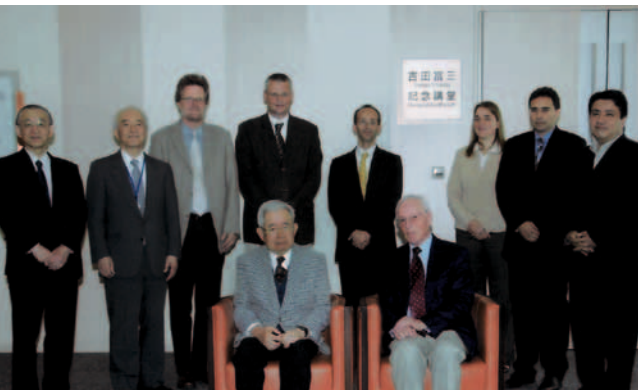
Otmar Wiestler summarized the stimulating scientific program and discussed future plans to further strengthen interactions between the NCC and DKFZ, which include new issues for joint research projects, structured exchange programs for students and postdocs as well as further joint conferences.

Our delegation also visited the Japanese Foundation of Cancer Research, an institution with a century old history in cancer research. We were welcomed by Professor Harui Sugano and Professor Tomoyuki Kitagawa, who have longstanding connections to DKFZ, and subsequently met with His Imperial Highness Prince Hitachi, who is an established cancer researcher and Honorary Member of the German Cancer Society. After a presentation of current research topics at the Institute by Professor Tetsuo Noda, we were taken on

exchange

Polish-German Cooperation in Cancer Research

a site tour which particularly stressed the close interactions between clinical, translational and basic cancer research built into the blueprint of the Institute. There were plenty of opportunities to meet informally; the reception of the NCC was a culinary highlight of the visit, and Professor Peter Bannasch hosted the second Japanese Meeting of the DKFZ Alumni Association, which was attended by many of our Japanese colleagues. Before returning to Germany, we had the chance to experience the vibrant atmosphere of the famous Tokyo



During the visit at the Japanese Foundation of Cancer Research the German group had the chance to meet His Imperial Highness Prince Hitachi (in the front, left of Prof. Peter Bannasch).

fish market in the early morning, with lively auctions of fishes coming in all sizes. The delegation left Tokyo grateful for the extraordinary hospitality shown by our Japanese hosts – and with plans to team up and make exciting cancer research happen.

The Polish-German Cancer workshops were initiated by the Alumni Association to stimulate scientific cooperation between these two geographically and politically closely related countries. The 1st Polish-German Cancer Workshop took place at DKFZ in 2008, right before the 3rd General Alumni Meeting. In the meantime, a small German delegation, led by the Chairman and Scientific Member of the DKFZ Management Board, Professor Otmar D. Wiestler, has visited the Warsaw and Gliwice branches of the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Memorial Cancer Center and Institute of Oncology in order to further explore potential areas of scientific cooperation. To the same end, the second Polish-German Cancer Workshop (for the detailed program see our last Alumni-Newsletter, 1/2009) provided an opportunity to continue the discussion in Gliwice on November 20, 2009. While a variety of topics was presented at the first meeting in Heidelberg, the second workshop was focused on two topics, 1) Functional Genomics in Cancer Research, and 2) Molecular Epidemiology of Cancer.



3rd Polish-German Cancer Workshop

Thursday, June 17, 2010, DKFZ

The 3rd Polish-German Cancer Workshop will again be organized at DKFZ and, like the second meeting in Gliwice, will be financially supported by the DAAD-program Alumni-plus. Just like the first, the third workshop will precede the General Alumni Meeting, the program of which is detailed on the following pages. The workshop will be devoted to “Radiobiology and Radio-Oncology”, areas in which strong groups exist in both places. Professor Piotr Widlak from the Maria Skłodowska-Curie Memorial Cancer Center and Institute of Oncology and Professor Wolfgang Schlegel from DKFZ kindly agreed to coordinate the program.

We cordially invite all interested colleagues to attend the third Polish-German Cancer Workshop in Heidelberg. **Funds for travel expenses and accommodation will be provided by the DAAD for up to 14 Polish Alumni from DKFZ and the University of Heidelberg who are back in Poland.** Applications should be directed to the Secretary of the Alumni Association, Elfriede Mang (e-mail: E.Mang@dkfz.de), DKFZ, Im Neuenheimer Feld, 69120 Heidelberg, before **April 17, 2010**. The proposal should include a curriculum vitae and a list of publications. The Board of the Alumni Association will be responsible for possible selections and the final approval of the applications.

I am looking forward to a hopefully successful workshop in 2010, further stimulating the exchange of ideas and the establishment of cooperation projects between Polish and German scientists doing basic and clinical cancer research.

Peter Bannasch

symposium

4th General Meeting of the Alumni DKFZ Heidelberg including Alumni Heidelberg Life-Science Lab

It is my pleasure to cordially invite all Alumni of DKFZ and the Heidelberg Life-Science Lab as well as current scientists of DKFZ and the University of Heidelberg to participate in our 4th General Meeting to be held in the Communication Center of DKFZ on Friday and Saturday, June 18/19, 2010.

This is the first time that the Alumni of the Heidelberg Life-Science Lab are not only invited as participants but are actively involved in the preparation and performance of the meeting which we gratefully acknowledge.

The plenary sessions of the symposium are focused on three topics, in which DKFZ Alumni have made outstanding contributions:

- 1) Biology of Cancer Cells (including speakers of, and short information on, the Heidelberg Life-Science Lab),*
- 2) Infection and Cancer, highlighted by a keynote lecture of the Nobel Laureate for Medicine 2008, Harald zur Hausen, and*
- 3) Public Relations and Patient Information on Cancer.*

Encouraged by Alumni of the Heidelberg Life-Science Lab, there will also be an opportunity to discuss a wide range of additional topics related to cancer, namely, signaling and RNAi, targeted therapy, metabolic aberrations, molecular epidemiology, molecular imaging, and immunological aspects, with leading experts in smaller groups after the plenary sessions on both days of the meeting. The traditional Friday lecture of the Life Science Lab this time will be given by Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, Director of the Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, as part of our Alumni meeting.

In advance of this event and the "Meet the Expert" sessions there will be a discussion of posters exhibited throughout the meeting. All Alumni of DKFZ and of the Life Science Lab, as well

as young DKFZ scientists are invited to present their most recent results on posters (90 cm width x 120 cm height). Three poster awards will be provided (300 Euro each, plus travel grants of 200 Euro for participants from Europe, and 300 Euro from countries outside of Europe).

On Saturday morning the General Assembly of the Alumni Association of DKFZ will convene, following the agenda outlined below. At the same time, there will be information on the Helmholtz International Graduate School for Cancer Research for interested students. After these activities, the plenary session on Public Relations and Patient Information, and three scientific topics offered by experts will complement the program of the morning.

In addition to the scientific program, may I draw your attention to very attractive social events:

- 1) the reception by the DKFZ Management Board on Friday evening in a musical setting*
- 2) the solar boat trip on the Neckar river with sight-seeing on Saturday afternoon, and*
- 3) the following excursion via cable car and walking (approx. 30 minutes) from the Königstuhl to the Alte Kohlhof.*

These events will provide excellent opportunities to improve contact with each other across the generation, and exchange ideas of mutual interest. I sincerely hope that many participants will take advantage of these opportunities. We appreciate the generous support for travel expenses for a limited number of Alumni from abroad by the DAAD.

On behalf of the Board of the Alumni Association I once again invite you to the 4th General Alumni Meeting and look forward to welcoming many of you at this event.

Peter Bannasch



symposium

Friday, June 18, 2010, DKFZ Communication Center

	Welcome and Introduction (Lecture Hall)		
9.00 h	<i>Otmar D. Wiestler</i> , Chairman and Scientific Member of the DKFZ Management Board	14.45 h	Coffee break
	<i>Peter Bannasch</i> , Chairman of the Board of Alumni Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum	15.00 h	<i>Qin Su</i> , Beijing HBV-Infection and liver cancer
	Biology of Cancer Cells (Lecture Hall) Chairs: <i>Peter Krammer</i> , <i>Peter Schirmacher</i>	15.30 h	<i>Hans-Georg Kräusslich</i> , Heidelberg HIV and AIDS today
9.15 h	<i>Raymond Nagle</i> , Tucson The application of biomarkers in the diagnosis and management of cancer	16.00 h	Poster Session with coffee (Foyer Communication Center) Committee selecting poster awards: <i>Adelheid Cerwenka</i> , <i>Norbert Fusenig</i> , <i>Kari Hemminki</i> , <i>Gerhard van Kaick</i> , <i>Annette Kopp-Schneider</i> , <i>Jean Rommelaere</i>
9.45 h	<i>Werner W. Franke</i> , Heidelberg Cumulative changes of differentiation and the formation of novel structures in cancer cells	17.30 h	Meet the Experts (Conference Rooms) <i>Heike Allgayer</i> , Heidelberg/Mannheim Challenges of targeted cancer therapy
10.15 h	<i>Simone Fulda</i> , Ulm Targeting apoptosis pathways in cancer therapy		<i>Michael Boutros</i> , Heidelberg Signaling and RNAi
10.45 h	Coffee break		<i>Stephan Herzig</i> , Heidelberg Cancer and metabolism: molecular connection
11.00 h	<i>Michael Breckwoldt</i> , Munich Introduction to the Life-Science Lab and the Alumni Association of the Life-Science Lab – Why should and how can high school students work in a science lab?	19.00 h	Special Lecture: Friday Lecture Heidelberg Life-Science Lab (Lecture Hall) Introduction: <i>Katrin Platzer</i> , Heidelberg
11.15 h	<i>Oliver Hantschel</i> , Vienna Structural, mechanistic and functional analysis of Bcr-Abl and its tyrosine kinase inhibitors in chronic myelogenous leukemia		<i>Hans-Jörg Rheinberger</i> , Berlin On the difficulty to know what one does not know: The art of exploring the unknown
11.45 h	<i>Clemens Buß</i> , Rehovot A statistical physics model for DNA transcription		
12.15 h	Lunch break		
	Infection and Cancer (Lecture Hall) Chairs: <i>Lutz Gissmann</i> and <i>Stefan Meuer</i>		
13.30 h	Keynote Lecture <i>Harald zur Hausen</i> , Heidelberg Infectious agents causing human cancers: state and perspectives		
14.15 h	<i>Massimo Tommasino</i> , Lyon Can we learn more from HPV research?		



symposium

Saturday, June 19, 2010, DKFZ Communication Center

9.00 h **General Assembly Alumni Association DKFZ**
(Conference Room 1/2)

Agenda

- Approval of the Agenda and of the Minutes of the previous General Assembly
- Report on the Activities of the Alumni Association by the Chairman
- Report on the Activities of the Advisory Council
- Report by the Treasurer
- Report by the Auditors
- Approval of the Board's Actions
- Election of Board Members
- Any other business

9.00 h **Information on the Helmholtz International Graduate School for Cancer Research**

(Lecture Hall)

Lindsay Murrells, Heidelberg

10.30 h **Public Relations and Patient Information in Cancer and Cardiovascular Diseases ***

(Lecture Hall)

Chair: *Hilke Stamatiadis, Stefanie Seltmann*

Julia Rautenstrauch, Stuttgart

Journalist meets scientist: public relations in science

11.00 h *Daniel Stolte, Tucson*

Cowboys, coyotes, cardiovascular research – Promoting science in the American southwest

11.30 h *Regine Hagmann, Heidelberg*

The future of cancer information for the public: Personal communication or World Wide Web?

* *sponsored by Merck Pharma, Darmstadt*

12.00 h **Coffee break**

12.15 h **Meet the Experts** (Conference Rooms)

Barbara Burwinkel, Heidelberg

Molecular epidemiology of cancer

Fabian Kiessling, Aachen

Molecular imaging in oncology

Bruno Kyewski, Heidelberg

Self tolerance, autoimmunity and cancer

Social events

Friday, June 18, 2010

20.00 h **Reception by the Management Board**

(Foyer Communication Center)

Musical setting:

Ladies' Vocal Trio and Boyband A-capella "anders"

Josef Puchta

Administrative-Commercial Member of the DKFZ Management Board

Labs for the future: Reconstruction of the main building of DKFZ

Saturday, June 19, 2010

14.00 h **Solar boat trip**

on the Neckar river with sight-seeing, guided by Dietrich Bahls, followed by an

Excursion

via cable car and walking (approx. 30 minutes) from the Königstuhl to the Alte Kohlhof



Registration and Call for Abstracts

We ask all Alumni and current scientists of DKFZ, the Heidelberg Life-Science Lab, the University of Heidelberg and related research institutions who plan to participate in the Meeting to register by **May 15, 2010**, and those Alumni who intend to present a poster to submit the title and a short abstract (about one page) by then as well. Participation in the scientific program is free of registration.

Registration is possible either **by fax reply** (forms can be downloaded from www.dkfz.de/alumni) or **online** via www.lab-alumni.de/meeting2010. Formal invitation letters may be provided if desired. Registration will be confirmed by e-mail.

information

National Reference Center for Cancer Information

by Regine Hagmann



The Cancer Information Service offers up-to-date, quality-assured, and easy to understand information on the telephone, on the internet, and via e-mail:

- for Cancer Information dial
0 800 - 420 30 40
- www.krebsinformationsdienst.de
- krebsinformationsdienst@dkfz.de

Today, cancer patients and their families can choose from a large number of organizations and services offering support and information. The main challenge is not to find cancer information at all, but to decide which information to trust.

The increased need for high-quality and evidence-based cancer information has left a mark on the Cancer Information Service (Krebsinformationsdienst, KID) at the German Cancer Research Center. The service was initiated by Hilke Stamatidis-Smidt, the former Head of the Public Relations Office of DKFZ. It was set up as a pilot project of the German Federal Ministry of Health in 1986, the idea was to make cancer information available to the public.

It was mainly due to the late Dr Hans-Joachim Gebest (see below), Head of the Cancer Information Service since 2004, that the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research announced that it would grant long-term institutional funding for the KID in April 2009, and, thus, paved the way for transforming of the service into a "National Reference Center for Cancer Information".

Ambitious goals for 2010:

- increase of telephone staff to improve line availability
- cooperation with the University Cancer Center Dresden (UCC), including a KID field office on the premises of the UCC
- projected development of the KID website www.krebsinformationsdienst.de and KID internal database
- development of an information service for physicians to assist the translation of research findings into clinical practice

The center will mark the standard for cancer information which is reliable, up-to-date, and based on scientific evidence. A closer cooperation with the German Cancer Aid will support the transformation of KID into the National Reference Center. The new funding model will enable KID to provide cancer information for everybody in Germany – with one number to dial for cancer information: 0800-420 30 40.

Obituary

Dr Hans-Joachim Gebest, Head of the Cancer Information Service, died completely unexpectedly at the age of 60. After longstanding experiences as an internal medical specialist, including several leading positions in clinical oncology, he joined DKFZ in 2004. From the very beginning he managed the Cancer Information Service with great enthusiasm and strategic thinking, introducing many innovations. It was mainly due to

his approach that the Service became a National Reference Center in 2009, and it is indeed tragic that he did not have the chance to further develop this important initiative to the benefit of cancer patients throughout Germany and see more of the results of his outstanding achievements. DKFZ has lost an impressive personage and grieves in sympathy with his wife, Dr. Christiane Gebest, and his four children.



people

New Scientific Council

The Council is composed of the speakers of the seven Research Programs of DKFZ and one elected scientist from each.

Cell Biology and Tumor Biology

Prof. Dr Christof Niehrs
Prof. Dr Ingrid Grummt

Functional and Structural Genomics

Prof. Dr Roland Eils
Dr Jörg Hoheisel

Cancer Risk Factors and Prevention

Prof. Dr Kari Hemminki
Prof. Dr Annette Kopp-Schneider

Tumor Immunology

Prof. Dr Peter Krammer
Prof. Dr Bruno Kyewski

Imaging and Radiooncology

Prof. Dr Wolfgang Schlegel
Prof. Dr Stefan Delorme

Infection and Cancer

Prof. Dr Henri-Jaques Delecluse
PD Dr Ingrid Hoffmann

Translational Cancer Research

Prof. Dr Christof von Kalle
Prof. Dr Stefan Eichmüller

In its constituent assembly on September 22nd, 2009, **Dr Jörg Hoheisel** and **Prof. Christof von Kalle** were re-elected as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively.

Appointments

Dr Karin Greulich-Bode, Division of Genetics of Skin Carcinogenesis, has been elected Equal Opportunities Representative. She follows Dr Barbara Bertram who started partial retirement in April.

Dr Jana Grünwald took the position of scientific coordinator for International Collaboration in March. She manages the net-working with international research institutions, organizes events and serves as contact person for foreign visitors.

Retirement

Prof. Sandor Suhai, Head of the Division of Molecular Biophysics, retired on August 31, 2009.

Awards to DKFZ Scientists



The **Heidelberg Life-Science Lab (HLSL)**, a DKFZ program for the promotion of scientifically talented pupils, was awarded the Grand Prize "School meets Science" of the Robert Bosch Foundation under patronage of the Federal Minister of Education and Research Annette Schavan. The Prize of 50,000 Euro will support the HLSL in the implementation

of lectures, weekend seminars, national and international holiday academies as well as working groups under supervision of scientists, teachers and students. Nobel Laureate and Chairman of the jury, Prof. Erwin Neher (middle) with representatives of the HLSL (from left): Ali Abbasi, Dr Katrin Platzer, Jochen Reider and Jessica Oberheim.



The company **PEPperPRINT**, founded eight years ago by DKFZ researchers **PD Dr Frank Breitling** (far left), **PD Dr Ralf Bischoff** (right) and **Dr Volker Staudler** (second left) together with **Frieder Breitling** (not shown), won first prize

in the „Science4Life“ competition on business concepts. The award of 30,000 Euro acknowledges the development of a technology for a quick and cheap production of peptide chips used in medical diagnostics.

people

Awards to DKFZ Scientists



Marc Remke, Division of Molecular Genetics, received the Subsidy Award for PhD students endowed with 2,500 Euro for his research on molecular mechanisms in childhood cancers. The German Society for Hematology and Oncology conferred the prize during the Annual Conference of the German, Austrian and Swiss Societies on Hematology and Oncology 2009.



Dr Lena Maier-Hein, Division of Medical and Biological Informatics, is this year's awardee of the Waltraud-Lewenz-Prize endowed with 7,500 Euro. During her PhD thesis the researcher developed a computer-based positioning system which has become a decisive element in the treatment of cancer metastases in the liver. It allows for precise tumor targeting by minimal invasive surgery. The Scientific Council of the German Cancer Research Center confers this bi-annual prize according to the will of Waltraud Lewenz.



Dr Heike Krebber, former member of the Division of Molecular Biology of Mitosis at DKFZ and now at the Institute for Molecular Biology and Tumor Research, University of Marburg, is one of the awardees of the Heinz Meier-Leibniz-Prize 2009. She was honored for her highly recognized research on the transport between nucleus and cytoplasm with special regard to mRNP biogenesis. The prize of 16,000 Euros is conferred by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft).



Dr Wilfried Roth, Head of the Junior Research Group Molecular Neuro-Oncology, received the Rudolf-Virchow-Prize 2009. The award endowed with 5,000 Euro is the highest distinction of the German Society of Pathology for young German scientists. Roth is investigating the ability of tumor cells to escape apoptosis.



Dr Stefan Pfister, Division of Molecular Genetics at DKFZ and Pediatric Oncologist at the Center for Childhood and Juvenile Medicine of the University Hospital Heidelberg, shares the Kind-Philipp-Preis 2008 of 15,000 Euros with two research colleagues from Hannover and Münster for their excellent research results on childhood cancers. Additionally, Pfister won the Sybille-Assmus-Subsidy Award for Neurooncology 2009 endowed with 5,000 Euro. His research findings on genetic alterations in childhood brain tumors allow an individualized therapy with fewer side effects.



Prof. Harald zur Hausen, Professor Emeritus, former Scientific Director and Chairman of DKFZ Management Board and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Medicine 2008, was decorated with the Great Cross of Merit with star of the Federal Republic of Germany. Federal President Horst Köhler conferred the state decoration and thereby acknowledged the excellent research of this scientist. Just recently, zur Hausen was elected President of the German Cancer Aid. He follows Professor Dagmar Schipanski, who will resign from office by the end of the year. Zur Hausen also received the Medal of Honor from the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin for his outstanding contributions to science and public health. Additionally, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) honored Harald zur Hausen with the membership in the organization for his exceptional research activities. NAS acts as an advisory board for the US government.



PD Dr Adelheid Cerwenka, Head of the Boveri Research Group Innate Immunity, was honoured with the Georges Köhler Prize 2009. The German Society for Immunology conferred the award of 3,000 Euro to the researcher for her outstanding investigations on the impact of natural killer cells in the defense of tumors.

Awards to Alumni

guest report

Fostering Early Steps of an Academic Career

by Maya Margaritova Zaharieva

The story began eight years ago in 2001, when the ERASMUS Program for the advancement of student exchange within Europe was also established in Bulgaria. At that time, I was still a student of pharmacy at the Medical University of Sofia, the oldest medical university in Bulgaria, which is known among physicians, dentists and pharmacists for its fundamental educational system. My attention was attracted by the research of new cytotoxic compounds in the field of oncology. I was also fascinated by the idea of working on the development of the new laboratory for Molecular Pharmacology and Experimental Chemotherapy there.

As my diploma supervisor Associate Professor Spiro Konstantinov held a collaboration with Professor Martin Berger, Head of the Research Group Toxicology and Chemotherapy at DKFZ, I got my first opportunity to come to the German Cancer Research Center in Heidelberg for four months in order to perform the experimental part of my diploma work and to enlarge my laboratory skills. It

was a great experience to stay in Heidelberg which determined my decision for a scientific carrier in the future.

After this exchange I came back to Heidelberg twice. The first time, I joined the group of Professor Berger in 2004, already as a PhD-student with the financial support of DAAD for one year. Then, after my promotion at the Medical University of Sofia, I came back as guest scientist and fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation for a period of 18 months.

During my first visit at DKFZ I started working on a new group of drugs, the alkylphosphocholines. One derivative of this group (hexadecylphosphocholine) is already in clinical use. Since then I have continued to work in this field, and my current investigations concentrate on the mechanism of action of a new member of this group of substances, named erucylphosphocholine (erufosine). It belongs to the third generation alkylphosphocholines, shows high efficacy

against leukemia cell lines without affecting the normal hematopoiesis and, in contrast to other members of this group of drugs, it can be administered intravenously. The results achieved are very promising and probably will contribute to a better understanding of the mechanism of action of the whole pharmacological group. In addition, the synergistic interactions found between erufosine and certain classical cytostatics will facilitate the choice of combination partners for erufosine once it is in clinical use, especially for patients with resistance to conventional therapy.

Actually, I was very lucky to work in cooperation with interesting people both in Germany (at DKFZ and the Central Institute of Mental Health, ZI, in Mannheim) and Bulgaria (at the Medical University of Sofia and the National Center for Clinical and Transfusion Hematology) and I am very grateful to all my colleagues, scientific leaders and foundations who supported me in my scientific carrier until today.

Yet, I have to admit that my experience in Germany was much more than only scientific experiments. Thanks to the contacts with my colleagues I managed to improve my skills in German and English languages. Besides, I established long-lasting personal and scientific relationships with scientists. Furthermore I took the chance to travel around Europe during the weekends and some days off. I visited many cities in Europe and especially in Germany and became much more familiar with the culture and customs in this wonderful country.

When I leave for Bulgaria I will have a much broader experience in science and life and great memories from Germany. Now, I can easily say, I lost my heart in Heidelberg...



Dr Maya Margaritova Zaharieva studied pharmacy in Sofia, Bulgaria, with special focus on cytotoxic compounds applied in oncology. She worked on experimental chemotherapy in the laboratory, but also gained experience in drug dispensary and patient consultation in a pharmacy. These skills together with an excellent knowledge of German which she adopted during

studies of German philology made the start at DKFZ easy for the scientist. Maya Margaritova Zaharieva revisited Heidelberg twice after an initial period of three months. Now she is working at DKFZ as a Humboldt fellow in the Research Group Toxicology and Chemotherapy headed by Professor Martin R. Berger.

local event

Rowing against Cancer by Astrid Beiglböck

On September 12th, 77 teams entered in a competition to row against cancer – a true pro-am tournament. The National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg and the foundation "Leben mit Krebs" (Living with cancer) joined efforts to organize this event. The goal was to raise money for the patients' sports program at NCT.

The day started with beautiful weather and smooth water – perfect conditions for this event. The whole Neckar River was covered with rowing boats. Even the barge traffic had to be officially discontinued on this occasion. The 77 teams mainly made up of amateur rowers went to the start – six boats per round. The top four progressed to the pros' and the amateurs' semi-finals and finals. DKFZ fielded four teams in the competition, resulting in a second place in the professionals' semifinals and a fourth place in the amateurs' finals. There was also a regatta for kids and for young adults who had survived cancer during their childhood. 20 adult cancer patients decided not to use the classical rowing boats but to jump into a dragon boat.

The competition with the highest "fun factor" was the exciting "Four-against-Eight" race: Four members of the German World Cup Team started against a VIP-Eight with cox, an Eight from the University and one boat from the Hospital, consisting of Professor Dirk Jäger, Dr Nico Bretz, Michael Sauer, Dr Nicolas Attigah, Professor Jürgen Debus, Dr Ralf



Joint forces: 20 former cancer patients started on the race in a dragon boat.

Tetzlaff, PD Dr Malte Ellerbrock and Daniela Hauk. By a very small margin the Hospital Eight won the race!

The event under the patronage of Dr Manfred Lautenschläger, who established the MLP group and the Dr Manfred Lautenschläger Foundation, and Dr Eckart Würzner, Lord Mayor of Heidelberg, was a big success: More than 1500 people attended and fifteen different booths providing information on cancer, sports and health management answered all sorts of questions for almost ten hours. More than 37,000 Euro were raised which will be dedicated to the NCT's sports program. Manfred Lautenschläger has agreed to sponsor an additional post-doc position.

The program consists of clinical trials where the impact of supervised physical training during cancer therapy is being analyzed. To this end, an experienced trainer develops the best exercise program for each individual patient. During the program the kind of physical activity suitable to improve outcome of cancer patients is monitored. All cancer patients in the area can participate in the training.

Encouraged by the success of this event, we are already planning a similar activity next year. You are cordially invited to come to compete as a rower or just to enjoy the atmosphere and the company.



excursion

From Modern High-tech Health Care to Ancient Roman Life

by Seyed Mohsen Moussavi

On July 23, a bus tour organized by the Alumni Association took a group of thirty-seven guest scientists to Bad Homburg. The first stop of this trip was Fresenius SE, a global health care company. The afternoon included a visit of the ancient fort Saalburg.

Martin Hepper, MD, Senior Manager Public Affairs, and Rebecca Richter, Manager Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, of Fresenius SE introduced us to the four business segments the Fresenius Group consists of: Fresenius

with the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC) Berlin-Buch, the Berlin Charité University Hospital and the University of Witten-Herdecke.

Fresenius VAMED operates in the project and management business of health care facilities worldwide. These include hospitals and health care centers as well as spas and wellness centers.

Last, but not least, Fresenius Biotech, which also belongs to the Fresenius

combination” was presented by Professor Elke Jaeger, Clinic for Oncology and Hematology, Hospital Northwest, Frankfurt. A guided tour through the product exhibition by Martin Hepper, concluded the visit at Fresenius SE.

In the early afternoon our group arrived at the Saalburg, the world’s only reconstructed Roman fort and archeological museum – just next to the Limes World Heritage Site, the ancient frontier between the Roman Empire and the



On tour: The group of DKFZ guest scientists enjoyed an informative and pleasant day.

Medical Care, Fresenius Kabi, Fresenius Helios and Fresenius Vamed. Each of the business segments is responsible for its own business operations worldwide. Throughout the world, Fresenius has more than 129,000 employees, almost 70 percent located outside Germany.

Fresenius Medical Care is a leading provider of products and services for individuals undergoing dialysis because of chronic kidney failure.

Fresenius Kabi focuses on infusion therapy and clinical nutrition and develops solutions for the therapy and care of critically and chronically ill patients inside and outside the hospital.

To be a specialist in hospital management with a focus on acute treatment and subsequent medical rehabilitation is the claim of the Fresenius Helios Kliniken Group. It consists of 62 hospitals, including five maximum care hospitals. The Helios Research Center coordinates and funds clinical research within the company in cooperation

health care group, is focused on the development and marketing of biopharmaceuticals in the fields of oncology and immunology/transplantation medicine. This includes immunosuppression in organ transplantation and the development of trifunctional antibodies for cancer treatment.

Dr Marion Ott, Medical Advisor, Fresenius Biotech, presented a lecture on “Development of Catumaxomab (Removab)” which traced the road from non clinical development to approval. The topic “Cancer and sports – A beneficial



The impressive Saalburg Roman Fort offered a vivid picture of the ancient life at the Limes.

Germanic tribal territories. On this trip through time, all participants of the excursion got a vivid picture of the history, culture and customs of an era whose heritage – although almost two thousand years old – still shapes our world today.

A fashion show of typical Roman clothes caused a lot of excitement when our group was asked to actively participate. Finally, at the end of our tour, we were able to witness an ancient tradition: In re-built ovens fresh Roman bread was baked. We also enjoyed the atmosphere of a Roman restaurant at the Museum Café Taberna with culinary offerings and specialties typical of ancient Rome before we returned to Heidelberg.

The Roman fashion show turned out to be a special experience for our group.

excursion

Oncological Research and Art Nouveau by Gerhard van Kaick

40 guest scientists joined the excursion to Darmstadt – despite the rainy and cold weather. When arriving at Merck in Darmstadt we got a warm welcome which felt like bright sunshine. The interesting stay at the pharmaceutical company was complemented by a visit to the crystallization point of Art Nouveau – the Mathildenhöhe.

After being restored by a second breakfast we were well prepared to listen – and to discuss – three excellent pres-



entations. The first was about the fascinating history of Merck, the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. It dates back to 1668 when Friedrich Jakob Merck acquired the "Engel-Apotheke" (Angel Pharmacy). More than 150 years later (1827) Heinrich Emanuel Merck switched from a pharmacy-trade to a research-based industrial company. Then, after World War II, the company had to start anew from the ruins. Today, Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical enterprise with approximately 32.000 employees in over 61 countries.

The following presentation introduced us to the most important medical application areas of Merck products, namely in oncology, neurodegenerative diseases, fertility, endocrinology, autoimmune and inflammatory diseases. With respect to innovative cancer-specific therapies Merck's researchers focus on new approaches that target specifically the tumor cells and influence the tumor

Mathildenhöhe (see also pictures above) awaits you with a special style of art, architecture and applied arts known as Art Nouveau.

environment. We learned that Merck is currently developing compounds in four areas:

- monoclonal antibodies
- therapeutic cancer vaccines
- immunocytokines
- angiogenesis inhibitors

One approach involves monoclonal antibodies that block the receptors for growth factors present on the surface of cancer cells. For example, the drug Er-



bitux (Cetuximab) against colorectal cancer works according to this principle. It is beneficial in cases where chemotherapy alone proves ineffective. Possible other indications for Cetuximab are non-small-cell lung cancer, gastric and breast cancer as well as head and neck tumours. Phase II and phase III studies for these indications are running. Advantages, side effects and drawbacks of the clinical application of Cetuximab were frankly presented and raised a vivid discussion among our group of guest scientists.

The challenge of developing and introducing new therapeutic substances covered the third presentation. Developing



a new drug takes an average of twelve years and costs between 600 and 800 million Euros. Only one molecule out of 5 to 10 000 tested will finally reach the market as a drug. Substances with prospects for success are legally required to undergo testing for their efficacy and tolerance in cell cultures and animals. This is followed by clinical trials, while the last hurdle is the regulatory approval. If the drug could potentially be used to treat other diseases, further clinical trials will commence.



Site visits to the huge "euro warehouse" and to the modern tablet production completed our comprehensive insight into the field of oncology at Merck. The possibility to continue scientific research later on in a pharmaceutical company seemed to be an inspiring idea for some of our guest scientists.

In the afternoon a guided tour led us to the Mathildenhöhe, an artists' colony initiated 1899 by the Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig. Mathildenhöhe became a crystallization point of Art Nouveau in Germany. Art Nouveau – in German "Jugendstil" – was an international movement and style of art, architecture and applied arts at the turn of the 20th century. It is characterized by organic, especially floral and other plant-inspired motifs. Art Nouveau monuments are now recognized by the UNESCO on their World Heritage List.

At the end we all joined together in an old restaurant adopted in its architecture to Jugendstil. Sitting in the restaurant faint rays of sunlight gilded the evening of our excursion. A friendly comment of a participant was: better a good tour and bad weather, than vice versa.

politics

Germany's Election: Reshuffling the Cabinet

by Dagmar Anders

Great excitement filled Germany on the last Sunday in September, the day of the election of the Bundestag. Would the alliance of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and her Bavarian counterpart the Christian Social Union (CSU) together with the liberal party (FDP) succeed in winning the majority of votes for the Bundestag once again after 1994? The FDP under leadership of Guido Westerwelle had been unambiguous in the run-up to the elections: They would only consider this kind of coalition. According to opinion polls before the election there seemed to be an edge for the CDU/CSU and the FDP. Nevertheless, suspense was guaranteed as one had to keep in mind, that, in a similar situation four years ago, the opposing parties achieved a turnaround right before the election.



New coalition partners: Angela Merkel, German Chancellor and leader of the conservative Christian Democratic Union party (CDU), and Guido Westerwelle, leader of the Free Democrats (FDP) meet at the Chancellery in Berlin September 28, 2009.

For the Social Democrats the election campaign turned out to be quite difficult this year. Since 1998 they have had their share in the governmental responsibility: Until 2005, when the Alliance '90/The Greens (Bündnis '90/Die Grünen) were the coalition partner, the SPD took the leading part with SPD politician Gerhard Schröder as chancellor. During the following election period of the grand coalition the SPD already had to face a loss of influence, but nevertheless claimed the positions of the vice chancellor and the foreign minister with Frank-Walter Steinmeier holding the offices. This year, the dilemma for the SPD quickly became obvious: Steinmeier was candidate for chancellor, which meant that the acting vice chancellor would have to challenge the acting chancellor, and the Social Democrats would have to attack the current government, a government they had participated in for four years themselves.

The SPD didn't really want to continue the grand coalition in the next election period, but on the other hand strictly denied a possible coalition with the Left at federal level. Yet, according to opinion polls, a majority vote for a government of the SPD together with the Alliance '90/The Greens (Bündnis '90/Die Grünen) – their favourite coalition partner – seemed to be completely unlikely. Thus, it was in doubt whether and how SPD candidate for Chancellor, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, had any chance to succeed. The only option would have been a so-called traffic-light-coalition consisting of the SPD (red), the FDP (yellow) and the B'90/The Greens, but the Liberals had already vehemently ruled out this solution four years ago. In this situation there was no way out except another four years in a grand coalition with the CDU/CSU. As it was expected that the Social Democrats would stay 10 percentage points behind the supposed coalition partner it was obvious that they had to leave the chancellor post to the CDU/CSU once again. Clearly enough, the SPD candidate for chancellor had to enter the election without the slightest chance of success. In this precarious situation there was hardly a way for the SPD to convince the voters to participate in the election.

Thus, all efforts of the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Left actually aimed at preventing a black-yellow majority. If this plan worked the grand coalition would have to be continued with a chancellor Merkel and a vice chancellor Steinmeier for better or worse.

Hence, the election campaigns of both big parties didn't see much of grim showdown. Offending the hitherto governmental partner was carried out with the utmost caution. The governmental achievements of the last years were acknowledged mutually. Especially the considerate crisis management during the international financial and economic breakdown of the preceding 12 months in which the coalition showed close and constructive collaboration was – deservedly – honored by both sides. Implicitly this appreciation was also a recognition of the opponent. The culmination of the “Nearly non-aggression pact” was reflected by a head-to-head TV debate of the two chancellor candidates one week before the election. Particularly Chancellor Merkel tried to stay off all attacks and remained as vague as possible. This was answered with fierce criticism out of her own ranks.

Moreover, Merkel also rejected an additional debate with the political opponents. Apparently she must have learnt her lesson from the failed election strategy four years ago: In 2005, the CDU/CSU released several tangible statements in case of an election success, e. g. they had announced an increase of value added taxes from 16 to 18 percent as well as a reformation of the highly complicated taxation law. These plans were attacked by the SPD right away. As a consequence, the Christian Parties clearly missed the envisaged election result of 40 percent plus x in 2005. With 35.2 percent a black-yellow majority could not be achieved. By the way, the Social Democrats had really made a mock of themselves: Once they were part of the new government, they confirmed the rise of the value added tax not only up to 18 percent, but even to 19 percent – against all previous assertions.

This year, Angela Merkel made the impression that she was far-off unsustain-

able promises like the ones of the SPD. Nevertheless, she seemed to be afraid to give a precise answer to the still unsolved problem of the huge national debt. The Chancellor apparently aimed to soothe the SPD voters to sleep. Without a severe concept of the enemy they would hopefully dispense on the election. At the same time – due to the lack of profile of the CDU – many voters were at risk of getting tired of CDU politics, too.

The FDP strictly stuck to a clear-cut strategy. They put all their efforts into a black-yellow coalition with well defined aims. The Liberals consistently affirmed their commitment to free market economy and a lean government that is supposed not to foster unprofitable enterprises. In case of governmental participation they proposed to simplify the taxation law with a considerable tax reduction. This was the situation on the election day.

On the election evening, it became already clear from the very first forecast that the Social Democrats had failed to activate their potential voters sufficiently. The turnout of voters which dropped from an already low 77.7 percent to an even worse 70.8 percent mainly affected the results of the SPD: They had to face a decline in the voters' favour from 34.2 to 23.0 percentage points! This was by far the worst result for the Social Democratic Party on a federal election. No other party had ever seen such a loss of

votes. But the other coalition partner CDU/CSU also lost considerable votes: The already poor percentage of 35.2 fell to 33.8 points.

Actually, the big winner of the election turned out to be the Liberals. The former 5-percent-party further improved its good result from 9.8 percent in 2005 to fabulous 14.6 percent – the historical summit. The straightforward course of the FDP was apparently acknowledged by the voters. And they obviously managed to convince former voters of the CDU/CSU. A gain of votes could also be observed with the two other major opposing parties: The Left improved the results from 8.7 to 11.9 percent, while the Greens recorded an increase from 8.1 to 10.7 percent. The latter achieved their best results ever; yet they only took place five instead of being third in the party ranking.

Expecting 35 percent and hoping for 40 percent the followers of the CDU/CSU were initially shocked about their poor result. But finally, they felt a great relief when it became clear that the nearly 15 percent of the Liberals would be sufficient for a new black-yellow coalition. As small parties often fail the required 5.0 percent for winning a seat in the federal parliament, about 47 percent of the valid votes turned out to be sufficient to win the absolute majority of seats in the Bundestag. At the same time this result confirmed that Angela Merkel would continue as Chancellor of the Federal Re-

public of Germany. Now she was able to establish a coalition with her favoured partner, the FDP.

The following coalition negotiations were carried on quite rapidly. As expected, FDP-leader Guido Westerwelle, who already acted quite statesmanlike on the election evening took office as both Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister. But the cabinet reshuffling also held some surprise. Particularly the staffing of the position of the Ministry of Health with 36-year-old Philipp Rösler came unexpectedly. The FDP politician with a medical degree was born in Vietnam where he lost his parents in the war. Being adopted at the age of nine months he started a new life in Germany. Soon after his inauguration the youngest acting federal minister announced a complete reform of the health system – an overdue Herculean task for which he will need a lot of perseverance.

In the first weeks of the new election period the cabinet already used several occasions to act on the national and international stage. Nevertheless, the next four years will be a great challenge for the new coalition partners to fulfil the previously made election pledges and the resulting expectations of the voters.

The building of the German Reichstag houses the federal parliament.





All in one boat: The NCT team of Dr Astrid Beiglböck, Prof. Dirk Jäger and Prof. Christof von Kalle together with their colleagues Prof. Wolfgang Wick and Prof. Jürgen Debus from the University Hospital (left to right) pulls hard to promote the benefit for cancer patients.

Obituaries for DKFZ Alumni

Professor Constantinos Sekeris, former Head of the Division of Molecular Biology of the Cell at the German Cancer Research Center (1974-1977) and Director of the Institute of Biological Research and Biotechnology of the Hellenic Research Foundation in Athens from 1977 until his retirement, passed away at the age of 77. His research was mainly devoted to the elucidation of the role of glucocorticoids in the regulation of gene expression and cellular metabolism. In Greece, he has not only made outstanding contributions to the establishment of molecular cell biology, but also had a strong impact on national science policy in general. Constantinos Sekeris was a member of DKFZ Alumni Association from its very beginning, reactivating his longstanding scientific relationships and personal friendship with many colleagues at this Center by attending the General Alumni Meetings in Heidelberg whenever possible.

Henryk S. Taper, MD, PhD, Unit of Pharmacokinetics, Metabolism, Nutrition, and Toxicology, Catholic University of Louvain, died at the age of 85. Spending the first decades of his life as a Polish citizen in Poland he escaped from the communistic system to the West, and became a Belgian citizen with worldwide connections in his scientific work, dealing mainly with neoplastic development in different tissues, particularly in the liver. In later years he also conducted experimental and clinical studies to improve cancer therapy. Henryk Taper was an enthusiastic scientist, working in the laboratory until he fell severely ill in 2008. In his studies on skin and liver carcinogenesis, he closely cooperated with scientists from DKFZ, visiting the center as a guest researcher in the early seventies. Appreciating his scientific links and his continuing friendship to colleagues at DKFZ he became a member of our Alumni Association years ago.

Imprint

Alumni
Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum
Heidelberg e.V.

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