

## News about services, staff, science and society

This is the first edition of a newsletter that will be published by the EMBL Office of Information and Public Affairs (OIPA) several times a year. Its production is motivated by the need for an efficient way to spread the word on issues relevant to the entire Laboratory. Over the last quarter of a century, EMBL has grown from an easily-purveyable number of scientists busy at a single Laboratory to a large community spread over five sites in four countries, and at last count the number of our scientific Alumni has reached 1,500. There are now nearly a thousand people working at the five EMBL sites. A newsletter can be of great value in raising awareness of what is going on in EMBL as a whole, particularly in improving communication between the main Laboratory and the Outstations; it can provide an important means of keeping our Alumni linked to the life of the Laboratory, and it will provide a forum for voicing issues which don't fit easily into EMBL's other publications. In particular, this will be a place where science and society issues can be explored in depth, in the form of letters or essays. It will also be a venue for publishing announcements from the administration and staff association.

This will be a valuable resource if it receives interesting contributions. Ideally, a significant part of its contents will come from the staff. For the next issue, we are soliciting the following types of contributions:

- news from each Outstation and from Monterotondo;
- news from EMBO and the EMBC;
- announcements from services and the computer group;
- announcements of upcoming talks or seminars of special interest;
- letters or essays relating to themes from science and society events;
- publications that have been accepted;
- major awards or grants;
- anything else of interest to the broader community.

For the moment, there will be no specific publication schedule. An electronic version of the newsletter, updated as items are added, will be available on the WWW soon. Submissions and suggestions should be sent to

newsletter@embl-heidelberg.de

### EMBL's PhD officially recognized by Baden-Württemberg

The EMBL International PhD Programme has received a letter from the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts announcing that the State is prepared to treat a PhD degree granted by the Laboratory in the same way that other international PhDs are accepted. The ministry has now recommended that the degree be recognized nation-wide, a decision which must be made by a national commission called the *Kultusministerkonferenz*.

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## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary EMBL Alumni Meeting

October 21-23, 1999  
at the Main Laboratory in Heidelberg

All former predocs, postdocs, scientists, group leaders, sabbatical visitors, Programme Coordinators, and Directors General welcome!



#### Speakers:

Michael Ashburner, Patrick Baeuerle, Suzanne Eaton, Anne Ephrussi, Jean Gruenberg, Juan Carlos Izpisua-Belmonte, Fotis C. Kafatos, Werner Kühlbrandt, Andrea Musacchio, Kai Simons, Irmi Sinning, Hermann Steller, David Tollervey, Isabel Vernos

# EMBL Council descends on Rome

The EMBL Council of Member States held its summer 1999 meeting in sweltering Rome, hosted by the Italian National Research Council (CNR), with one of the items on the agenda a visit to the new Research Programme in Mouse Biology in Monterotondo. A high point of the meeting was the announcement that the Host Site Agreement had been signed with Italy. Two items of interest at the meeting proper were the Director General's presentation of an outline of the next five-year Scientific Programme, which will have to be approved by the Member States at the end of 2000, and a salary adjustment which will mean a pay raise for Laboratory employees across all five sites.

The Scientific Programme is being developed with the help of input from the Group and Team Leaders' retreat at the beginning of this year and two consultations between senior faculty of the Laboratory and external experts, including members of EMBL's Scientific Advisory Committee. The outline featured a plan to "combine organizational stability with programmatic ferment." The current Units (Programmes and Outstations) are to be maintained while a number of interdisciplinary initiatives will be developed, contributing to an overall theme of functional genomics. The finished plan and the accompanying "Indicative Scheme" (whose

thrust is mainly financial) are critical because they will define the scientific orientation and the budget within which EMBL must operate over the next half-decade. Fotis' presentation of the broad themes was greeted enthusiastically by the delegates.

The Council also voted to approve recommendations from the Finance Committee regarding a 1999 salary adjustment. Laboratory employees will receive the following increases based on country: for France, an adjustment of 1.5%; for Germany, 1.7%; for Italy, 2.6%, and for the U.K., 4.2%. The increases have already been implemented in the July payroll.

The summer meetings of Council are now usually held at locations permitting the delegates to be acquainted with EMBL's Units outside Heidelberg. This meeting introduced Council to EMBL's new Research Programme in Mouse Biology in Monterotondo. At the outset of the meeting, Fotis was happy to announce that the Host Site Agreement had been signed with the Italian government on the previous day. Delays had been necessary to ensure that the agreement with Italy matched those of the other sites as closely as possible. The negotiations had resolved the issues in a satisfactory manner, with the exception of the tax status of Italian

nationals employed as Monterotondo staff; until a solution has been found, it will only be possible to hire Italians for positions as fellows there.

On the first of July, delegates toured the Monterotondo campus, including the attractive new EMBL laboratories. They were pleased by the scientific presentations from Walter Witke, Ulrich Kalinke and José de la Pompa, and by an overview of the Monterotondo Programme activities and ambitions by Coordinator Klaus Rajewsky. In a spirited presentation, Glauco Tocchini-Valentini, Director of the CNR's Institute of Cell Biology, expressed Italy's appreciation for the EMBL Programme as an important step in the internationalization of the Italian scientific environment. He described the CNR's efforts to date in supporting and integrating the work of all of the units that have taken up residence on the campus.

At a reception held on the grounds of a Foreign Ministry villa next to the Tiber, in the balmy Roman evening, the EMBL staff from Monterotondo, the Council delegates and the contingent of EMBL personnel from Heidelberg had the opportunity to mix with Italian dignitaries and celebrate this "debut" of the new EMBL Unit in Italy together.



*Italy's President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro (at right) attended ceremonies inaugurating the new campus*



*The Adriano Buzzati-Traverso campus in Monterotondo, Italy*

# Monterotondo campus opens its doors



On March 8, 1999, the "Adriano Buzzati-Traverso" International Scientific Campus, site of the new EMBL Research Programme in Mouse Biology, was officially opened by the Italian authorities in Monterotondo, Italy. The campus was created by the Italian National Research Council (CNR) with the goal of developing and internationalizing biological and biomedical research. Named for the CNR scientist who introduced modern

molecular biology to Italy, the center is intended to serve as a focal point for European science and technology.

The inauguration was attended by the President of the Italian Republic. Representatives from all of the units attended. EMBL was represented by Fotis C. Kafatos and Chairman of Council, Julio Celis; EMBO was represented by Executive Director, Frank Gannon. The keynote speeches were given by Antonio Ruberti, former Minister of Research and Technological Development for the European Union, Lucio Bianco, President of the CNR, and Fotis C. Kafatos, Director General of EMBL.

In addition to the EMBL Research Programme, the campus hosts:

- The CNR Institute of Cell Biology, operating national research activities, which is developing collaborative projects with EMBL on topics in biochemistry and molecular and cellular genetics.
- The European Mouse Mutant Archive (EMMA), funded by the CNR and the European Union. EMMA will store mouse strains, mostly as cryo-preserved embryos, submitted and used by research groups throughout Europe and the rest of the world. EMMA has a number of partner nodes throughout

Europe, including the CNRS (France), the MRC (England), the Karolinska Institute (Sweden) and the Goulbenkian Institute (Portugal).

- A unit from the Jackson Laboratories, which performs a similar function in the United States and will lend technical expertise and conduct training.
- The ENI, an international company mainly involved in the oil market.
- The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), a research organization with headquarters in Trieste and New Delhi, will join the campus in the year 2000. The ICGEB works within the context of the UN in the field of molecular biology and biotechnology, with an emphasis on sustained scientific and technological development and technology transfer in Third World countries.

One of EMBL's priorities in the future will be the expansion of its Research Programme, which will emphasize themes relevant to molecular medicine and which could play an important service role in developing new strains of mice in partnership with international collaborators.



*Klaus Rajewsky and Fotis Kafatos at the inaugural reception*



*Glauco Tocchini-Valentini*

*(baseball caps generously provided by Jackson Laboratories)*



Librarians Regina Herhoff and David Westley

Photo by Doug Young

## New faces at the Szilard Library

*"The Szilard Library started off with a table, a chair and a cupboard in the DKFZ in October 1974. Thirty journals were ordered and when the cupboard was full, everything was moved, with a few scientists, to the 'Alte Biochemie', Bunsen's old laboratory. At the end of 1977 we took possession of the Library on the hill. Then it was rather empty, now it is nearly full... In 1978 with some trepidation we tried our hands at on-line searching. We used a telephone and a teletype machine which spat out metres of light-sensitive paper at us ... IF we managed to contact the Database!"*

—Mary Holmes  
in "The Library Story"

Much has changed since the early days when Mary Holmes fought fearlessly with teletype machines and rudimentary electronic search instruments to come up with literature for her beloved researchers at EMBL. Mary retired in June of 1998 and takes with her the infinite thanks of the hundreds of scientists she helped. In the summer of 1998, librarians David Westley and Regina Herhoff joined the EMBL staff, bringing with them plans to lead the Szilard Library into the new millennium.

Both David and Regina have years of experience in helping scientists with their information needs: David spent four years in the small library at the German Rheumatology Research Center in Berlin, while Regina joined EMBL after working for three years at the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry in Munich. "I came from an institute of about 60 scientists and I was the one librarian," says David, "whereas Regina worked in a bigger library. One of the things that attracted us to the library here at EMBL is that there were many developments in the planning and we also saw many things that we would like to

change and improve. We have a lot of responsibility here, we have set up ideas for how we want to develop the library and we have had a lot of autonomy to do that."

High on their agenda for change was the atmosphere of the library. So over the past year the Szilard library has had a facelift. In addition to the rebuilding of the library stores, new carpet has been laid and new lighting, shelves, air-conditioning and more computers have been installed. The result is an inviting setting where EMBL staff and scientists can browse through the library's 230 journals, work on research papers, or simply read the many newspapers available in seven different languages. David also points out that "in future we would like to be able to offer more working space and more room for people who want to come down to write their dissertations. We're getting some iMac computers, but if we put them on the desks we'll lose room. We would like to offer proper work carrels, if we had the space."

A unique aspect of EMBL and of the library is its 24-hour open-door policy. Unlike libraries at many other institutes which are closed after working hours and at weekends, EMBL's doors are always open. "DKFZ, for example, isn't open like we are," says David. Unfortunately, as in any other library, books and journals do sometimes disappear from the shelves. "We wouldn't want to stop free access at EMBL," David says. "The point is that people here work late, at weekends, and they've got to be able to do that. We want to be able to ensure this freedom of access. We've tried to improve things by putting the magnet lock on the door. We've also put a book return box in, and that helps."

Also high on the list of things to develop is the content of the library itself and the resources and services that it provides. "We have spent some 9,000 DM on new reference books and we'd like to renew the book collection," Regina says. "Book proposals for the library are always welcome. Additionally, the Science and Society book collection has now been moved to the library." In terms of services, the emphasis will be on quick and reliable electronic delivery of information. A major project is to develop the services that can be accessed through the library's website. Researchers at EMBL can now access 65 journals electronically, as well as the library's catalogues. They can also order articles on-line and request patent and citation searches. "In the long term," says David, "with everything going much more in the direction of the electronic digital library, we would like to offer more that people can do from their lab or their office, without having to come to the library."

Other electronic initiatives in the library include CD-ROM databases which provide access to sources including Dorland's Medical Dictionary and Encyclopedia Britannica. "At the moment we have one PC for CD-ROM use and a new Mac to be used exclusively for catalogue searches, as well as four public Macs, with a further four iMacs to be installed shortly," Regina says.

Long-term projects also include purchasing a book scanner and digitalizing a large part of the library. "Though this would involve some investment in terms of equipment and staff to scan texts," David says, "in the long term, it would have huge benefits in terms of accessibility." Regina adds, "We would also like to introduce an electronic library newsletter to inform scientists about recent changes."

This increased accessibility will not only benefit researchers in Heidelberg, who will be able to do literature searches from their desks, but will also provide support to researchers at the other EMBL sites across Europe. "They are quite reliant on electronic journals, particularly in Rome," says David. "We have tried to be aware of this. We have tried to find out what the researchers there actually need, what their priorities are and then to make sure that the library here is a support for them as well."

One of the problems that the library has encountered in expanding its electronic resources is the high price tag attached to such services. While an on-line subscription to a journal is sometimes included in

the regular subscription price, in some cases it can cost up to 3,000 or 4,000 dollars more. On-line searching services also come at a hefty price. "I recently did a citation search for a researcher here at EMBL. I was on-line for a couple of hours and ended up spending a few thousand marks," says Regina. One way to circumvent the high costs involved in access to electronic resources is to go into consortium with other libraries. "There is a lot more we could do if we joined forces with, for example, DKFZ, the University of Heidelberg or Mannheim Clinic," says David, "and this is definitely on our long-term plan list."

## Who was Leo Szilard?

Leo Szilard was born in Budapest in 1898. He began his career in science in 1922 as a physicist at the Institute of Theoretical Physics at Berlin University, and then moved to the medical college at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London. While there, he collaborated with T.A. Chalmers and was one of the first scientists to envisage the possibilities of nuclear fission and chain reactions.

In 1937 he left England to take up a post at Columbia University in New York. During the 1930s he advised scientists not to publish results of chain reaction research, fearing the misuse of its dangerous possibilities. But equally aware of the danger at that time of Nazi Germany developing an atomic bomb first, he pressed the US government to support nuclear research and in 1939 helped persuade Albert Einstein to write to President Roosevelt advocating the immediate development of the atomic bomb. Thus, Leo Szilard became one of the key scientists involved in the Manhattan Project. Although Szilard had succeeded in helping to create the nuclear bomb, he failed in his passionate attempts to restrain its use. After Hiroshima, he worked intensely to advocate the peaceful applications of atomic energy and the international control of nuclear weapons.

In 1946 Szilard's scientific priorities shifted from physics to biology. Jacques Monod explained the move in this way: "...because of its very complexity and uncertainties, biology needed ideas, many ideas to be discussed, tested, rejected or temporarily accepted, that is, precisely the kind of goods that he knew he could provide in abundance and enjoyed dealing with." One of these abundant ideas was that a European laboratory for molecular biology should be established.

In the autumn of 1962, Szilard met with Victor Weisskopf and Italian physicist Gilberto Bernardini to discuss the laboratory. They then got in touch with a number of molecular biologists, including Sir John Kendrew, Francis Crick, Sydney Brenner and James Watson, all of whom showed interest. Slowly the idea began to take shape and in August of 1963, a meeting was held in Ravello, Italy, which resulted in three main proposals: that the project should be European and not world-wide; that in addition to a laboratory, fellowships and advanced teaching courses should be provided; and that a formal body known as the European Molecular Biology Organisation should be established.

Szilard died in California in 1964. He was a scientist who was deeply concerned with world peace and with efforts to create what he called "a more livable world." In 1962 he founded the Council for a Livable World whose symbol is a dolphin; this same dolphin motif is incorporated in the library book-plates as a

# EMBL kids get a new stomping ground



*Laying the foundation for EMBL's new Kinderkrippe and Kindergarten*



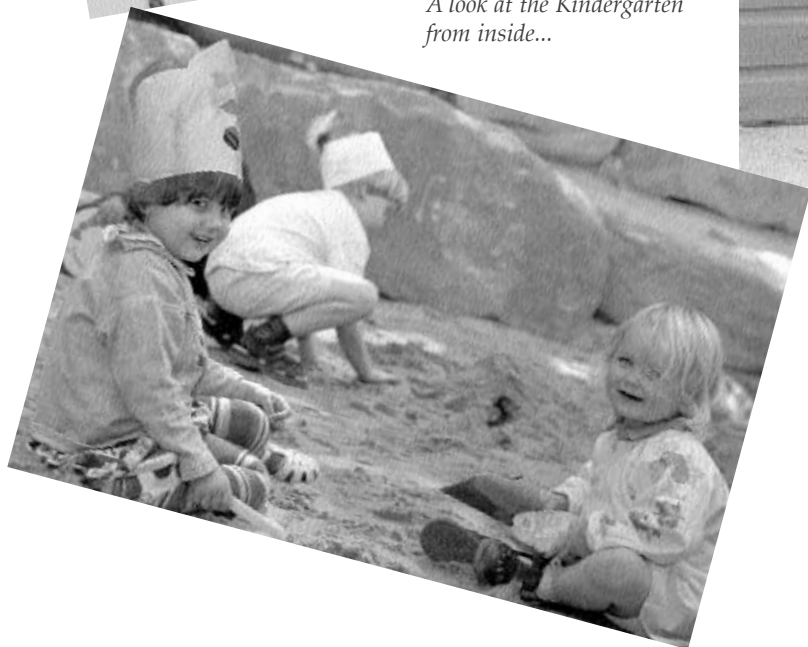
*The completed buildings*



*A look at the Kindergarten from inside...*



*...and from outside*



# science & society

The next Seminar of the Forum on Science and Society will take place on Monday, 15 September, 1999, at 15.00 in the Large Operon. **Jürgen Mittelstrass**, Professor of Philosophy and Philosophy of Science at the University of Constance, Germany will speak on "The Impact of the New Biology on Ethics."

Mittelstrass says, "Modern biology teaches us not only what our biological nature is, but also how to change it. This leads to serious ethical problems. As an example, cloning, in particular the possible production of human clones, is discussed. Here boundaries are crossed that seem to be set by nature itself. It is, however, made clear that such boundaries are always due to ethical considerations without recourse to individual intuitions or ideological prejudices. For Man is a being without measure who can only live under measures set by himself. But the results of the new biology also have consequences for ethics itself. The call for a bioethics and a physiocentric

ethics is discussed and arguments in favour of a properly understood anthropocentrism in ethics are put forward."

**Science and Society books** are now in the library. Since its establishment, the EMBL Science & Society Office has been active in ordering and collecting books on the history, philosophy, ethics, and anthropology of science. After about a year we had acquired a handsome collection of over one hundred titles, and these were kept in our Office and available on loan. The EMBL Science & Society Committee then decided that these documents should be moved to the Library where they would be more immediately available to the EMBL community. These books are now being catalogued and will shortly appear on the shelves in the library.

For a complete list of Science and Society Events and book titles, visit the website

<http://www.EMBL-heidelberg.de/ExternalInfo/stefans/>



*Alexandra Freiburg*  
10.9.1971 - 14.7.1999

Alexandra Freiburg joined EMBL's Structural Biology Programme in 1993 as a medical student from Heidelberg University. Since then, her work at EMBL focused on the molecular characterisation of the titin filament. Recently, her work significantly contributed to establishing links between the giant titin protein and human diseases. A prototype ELISA assay for the detection of titin autoantibodies, previously developed at EMBL, was further optimized by Alexandra. Based upon her protocols, several centers in Europe are now able to search routinely for titin autoantibodies in patients--a valuable marker for thymus neoplasia. Her molecular studies resulted in the cloning of the human cardiac C-protein gene, now known to be a frequently-mutated gene in families with inherited cardiac diseases.

Alexandra submitted her thesis work on the characterisation of titin's differential splicing in May. The following week, she developed autoimmune lung fibrosis. She had known of her "autoimmune problem" since she was 19. Many of us did not realize that this joyful, energetic, caring person might have had any reason not to enjoy life.

The time we had together with her at EMBL were happy years--we all miss her.

*Siegfried Labeit*

## ILO decides on salary adjustment for 1995

### SALARY ADJUSTMENT 1995 ILO ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL (ILOAT) JUDGEMENT

In December 1995 a number of staff took a formal complaint to the ILOAT challenging the EMBL Council decision on the 1995 salary adjustment.

In January 1998 the ILOAT issued their Judgement 1682. That Judgement required EMBL Council to take a new decision on the 1995 salary adjustment.

The EMBL Council decision was taken and notified to staff in July 1998. It confirmed that the salary adjustments for 1995 would be 0.3% for Germany and 0% for France and the United Kingdom and gave detailed reasons for the decision.

In July 1998 a number of staff took a further formal complaint to the ILOAT claiming that EMBL Council had not properly executed Judgement 1682.

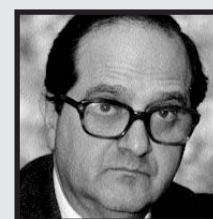
In their Judgement 1887 issued on 8 July 1999 and received in writing today the ILOAT set aside Council's decision of July 1998.

The matter is sent back to Council to take a new decision incorporating specified Co-ordinating Organisation increases (which we interpret as further adjustments for France 1.7%, Germany 2.1% and UK 3.4%) in respect of the EMBL salary adjustments for 1995.

Council will be considering this at their next scheduled meeting on 23 November and a further announcement will be made after that meeting has taken place.

Barton Dodd  
Administrative Director  
21 July 1999

On June 11, 1999, Paolo Fasella, former Director-General of the European Commission's DG XII (Science, Research and Development), and member of EMBO and EMBL Council for many



*Paolo Fasella*  
16.12.1930 - 11.6.1999

years, died in Rome, Italy. As a part of EMBL's original Scientific Advisory Committee, he played an instrumental role in laying the scientific foundations of the Laboratory. He will be remembered not only for his achievements in promoting scientific policies and programmes at the European level, but also for the never-ending enthusiasm and compassion he showed for those around him.

