



## New interdisciplinary structural biology centre for virus research and technology platforms

EMBL, CNRS and the University Joseph Fourier in Grenoble establish Unit for Virus and Host Cell Interactions (Unité Mixte Internationale)



The Carl-Ivar Brändén Building houses the international Unit for Virus and Host Cell Interactions on the Polygone Scientifique Campus in Grenoble.

**Grenoble, 26 June 2009** - On June 26 2009 the joint international Unit for Virus and Host Cell Interactions (Unité Mixte Internationale) was formally established in Grenoble. The unit is run jointly by CNRS, the Grenoble outstation of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and the Grenoble University Joseph Fourier. The aim of the unit is to foster interdisciplinary research and to develop technology platforms for structural biology.

The international unit has a unique structure in France in the areas of biology and health, which will facilitate interdisciplinary research in structural and molecular biology focusing on interactions between viruses and their hosts.

Future research topics include :

- o virus structures
- o assembly and maturation of viruses
- o virus and host cell interactions
- o host and virus gene expression mechanisms
- o cell biology of infected cells
- o innate immunity and anti-pathogen drug design

A particular strength of the Unit for Virus and Host Cell Interactions lies in the fields of influenza and HIV research. In addition, it will develop methods and technology platforms for structural biology such as high-throughput protein expression and crystallisation, electron microscopy, image analysis, and X-ray and neutron diffraction instrumentation.

Stephen Cusack, Head of EMBL Grenoble, will direct the unit for its first five years and deputy head will be Rob Ruigrok, professor at the University Joseph Fourier. ●

---

### Contact:

Anna-Lynn Wegener, EMBL Press Officer, Heidelberg, Germany, Tel: +49 6221 387 452, [www.embl.org](http://www.embl.org), [wegener@embl.de](mailto:wegener@embl.de)

## **About EMBL**

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory is a basic research institute funded by public research monies from 20 member states (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and associate member state Australia. Research at EMBL is conducted by approximately 80 independent groups covering the spectrum of molecular biology. The Laboratory has five units: the main Laboratory in Heidelberg, and Outstations in Hinxton (the European Bioinformatics Institute), Grenoble, Hamburg, and Monterotondo near Rome. The cornerstones of EMBL's mission are: to perform basic research in molecular biology; to train scientists, students and visitors at all levels; to offer vital services to scientists in the member states; to develop new instruments and methods in the life sciences and to actively engage in technology transfer activities. EMBL's International PhD Programme has a student body of about 170. The Laboratory also sponsors an active Science and Society programme. Visitors from the press and public are welcome.

## **About EMBL Grenoble**

The EMBL Outstation in Grenoble, France, is located in very close proximity to two unique European facilities for research in structural biology: the nuclear reactor of the Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL), which provides high flux neutron beams, and the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF), which produces Europe's most intense X-ray beams. EMBL Grenoble collaborates very closely with both of these facilities in building and operating beamlines for macro-molecular crystallography, in developing the associated instrumentation and techniques, and in providing biochemical laboratory facilities and expertise to external visitors, as well as supporting an active in-house research programme in structural biology.

### ***Policy regarding use***

*EMBL press and picture releases including photographs, graphics, movies and videos are copyrighted by EMBL. They may be freely reprinted and distributed for non-commercial use via print, broadcast and electronic media, provided that proper attribution to authors, photographers and designers is made. High-resolution copies of the images can be downloaded from the EMBL web site: [www.embl.org](http://www.embl.org)*