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## European Centre for Modern Drug Discovery Established in Hamburg

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**Hamburg is on its way to becoming a leading hub of Europe's academic drug discovery, with the northern German city's town hall today announcing the foundation of European ScreeningPort GmbH, a company that will run a state-of-the-art drug discovery service centre. European ScreeningPort is being established with the support of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Evotec AG and Norgenta, the north German life science agency. Although still in an early phase, the project has already raised more than EUR 7 million in financing.**

Hamburg's new European ScreeningPort will build upon research results generated in academia. It will enable a more systematic and efficient search for promising new compounds which can subsequently be further developed. Both Evotec AG and the City of Hamburg have invested into the newly founded company, which will be run as a public private partnership. This novel concept in advancing drug discovery will also be supported with considerable funds from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

ScreeningPort provides the missing link in Europe between academic research and the pharmaceutical industry. The research centre will accelerate translating promising results generated in basic research on the causes of diseases into new therapeutics. ScreeningPort will act as a service provider that enables academic research institutes to access its state-of-the-art technology, its vast amount of chemical compounds as well as its sample and data processing capabilities. New therapeutic concepts developed at universities can, in future, undergo the same standardised, more efficient and thus more cost-effective development processes that have, until now, been available only to industry. Pharmaceutical and biotech companies, for their part, can benefit from the research results generated at ScreeningPort and thus complement their own drug research.

ScreeningPort is planned to be at the heart of an international network. Although it is still at an early stage, a number of European research institutes have already been tied in. Among others, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zürich) and the Vienna-based Institute of Molecular Biotechnology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences have signed letters of intent.

The ScreeningPort project was initiated by Evotec AG, a leading drug discovery and development company, bringing in its extensive expertise. It was implemented by Norgenta GmbH, the north German life science

agency that promotes the structural development of life sciences in the federal states of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein.

Other partners are also raring to go, such as c.a.r.u.s. IT AG, a company specialised in high-performance data management solutions for life sciences.

**Statements:**

**Thomas Rachel, member of the German federal parliament and parliamentary secretary of state at the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research:**

"ScreeningPort is an important element to close the gap between basic research and the commercial development of new therapeutics. Therefore the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has decided to financially support, as part of its Pharmaceuticals Initiative for Germany campaign, the establishment of the ScreeningPort and initial pilot projects in screening. Total funding of more than EUR 800 million will be provided by 2011 under this initiative which is aimed at accelerating the development of innovative therapeutics for patients."

**Senator Gunnar Uldall, Head of the State Ministry of Economic and Labour Affairs, City of Hamburg:**

"By funding and implementing this project, we continue and further complement our successful cluster policy for the life sciences in northern Germany. The new ScreeningPort provides Hamburg with the opportunity to become a leading European centre of modern pharmaceutical research."

**Senator Jörg Dräger, Head of the State Ministry of Science and Research, City of Hamburg:**

"Establishing the European ScreeningPort in Hamburg is an important milestone in the development of the life science cluster in northern Germany. Together with our partners, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and Evotec AG, we are building a state-of-the-art research infrastructure from which universities in Germany and beyond will be able to benefit. Having this infrastructure for scientist to develop drug candidates for innovative therapeutics in place is a huge success for our scientific region and proof of the good work conducted by Norgenta, the cluster agency of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein."

**Jörn Aldag, President & Chief Executive Officer of Evotec AG:**

"We know from our many years of experience as a leading European partner in drug discovery for pharmaceutical and biotech companies worldwide, and from our own research on diseases of the Central Nervous System that academic research generates a plethora of excellent scientific ideas that require an industrial environment for further development. The initial step in this development is the search to identify biologically active chemical compounds. The European ScreeningPort provides us with the link that translates scientific discoveries into results that pharmaceutical

and biotechnological companies, such as Evotec, can build upon."

**Dr Kathrin Adlkofer, Managing Director of the North German Life Science Agency Norgenta:**

"Our main objective is to bring together existing excellence in science and business. ScreeningPort will see a unique network of partners in academia and industry who will mutually be able to benefit from pooling their expertise in medical science, technological know-how and industrial performance."

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