



Universitätsklinikum  
Hamburg-Eppendorf



Institut für Neuroimmunologie  
und Klinische Multiple Sklerose Forschung

gefördert durch die  
Gemeinnützige  
Hertie-Stiftung 

*Press release*

## **Inims and Merck Serono to Collaborate in Drug Discovery for Neurological Diseases**

**Hamburg, Germany - February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011:** The Institute of Neuroimmunology and Clinical Multiple Sclerosis Research (inims) of the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) announces a collaboration with Merck Serono, a division of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, for a joint drug discovery project. The collaboration is conducted within the “NEU<sup>2</sup> consortium” which is funded proportionally in the frame of the BioPharma initiative by The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium fuer Bildung und Forschung – BMBF).

The objective of the cooperation is the identification and pre-clinical development of a small molecular drug candidate for an undisclosed neurological target. The inims will primarily contribute its expertise in mechanistic studies; the European Screening Port (ESP), another partner of the NEU<sup>2</sup> consortium, will support the drug discovery project using its innovative technology platform.

### **About the inims**

Founded in September 2006 the Institute of Neuroimmunology and Clinical Multiple Sclerosis Research (inims) is the result of a cooperation of the Gemeinnützige Hertie Stiftung with the ZMNH and the Department of Neurology, University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE). The institute has been building up expertise, methodologies and infrastructure, required to conduct research with a clear focus on a complex human disease, multiple sclerosis (MS).

inims is headed by Prof. Dr. Roland Martin, an internationally renowned MS-scientist, who has been head of the “Cellular Immunology Section” at the NIH, USA until 2005.

The unique concept of inims intends to bridge between the basic science environment and disease-oriented clinical research, pursuing clinical trials, investigating questions related to disease heterogeneity and biomarkers in MS, but also providing patient care in the outpatient clinic, the MS day hospital and for inpatients as part of the UKE.

**Prof. Dr. Roland Martin, head of the inims, about the cooperation:** “This interdisciplinary collaboration shows that by bundling the competencies within the

NEU<sup>2</sup> consortium a rapid transfer of preclinical research results into clinical developments can be achieved. We are glad to be part of this consortium and feel confident that our approach of a translational medical research will be the right track.”

### **About NEU<sup>2</sup>**

The NEU<sup>2</sup> consortium, including, amongst others, the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Merck KGaA, Evotec AG, European ScreeningPort GmbH, and Bionamics GmbH, was successful in the nationwide “BioPharma” strategy competition of The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium fuer Bildung und Forschung – BMBF). The “BioPharma” strategy competition aims to promote innovative partnerships between academic institutions, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies in order to strengthen the pharmaceutical value chain in Germany. The NEU<sup>2</sup> consortium focuses on the development of novel therapies against neurological diseases with a specific focus on multiple sclerosis. The NEU<sup>2</sup> consortium is coordinated by Bionamics GmbH, an independent project management company and founder of NEU<sup>2</sup>.