

Press Release

European ScreeningPort and Merck KGaA Sign Research Agreement

Hamburg, Germany - 27 October 2010: European ScreeningPort GmbH, a Hamburg based service provider to academics for early drug discovery – set up as an innovative public private partnership entity - announced today that it has entered into an agreement with Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, as part of the New Drugs Fighting Neurological Diseases Consortium (NEU²).

Under the agreement, the European ScreeningPort will use its expertise in order to establish a high-throughput screening assay for a target implicated in multiple sclerosis. This will involve the evaluation of a variety of biochemical and cellular assay formats. Ultimately, it is envisaged that an appropriate high-throughput screening assay can be developed, which can be employed in a small molecule screening campaign to identify starting points for drug discovery.

Multiple sclerosis is one of the most widespread neurological diseases in young adults estimated to affect approximately 2 million people worldwide. The symptoms, onset and progression of these diseases are heterogeneous and their treatment is limited to using disease modifying drugs (DMDs) aiming towards improving the patient's quality of life.

Prof Carsten Claussen, Managing Director comments: "This agreement represents another step forward for the European ScreeningPort being attractive also for the Pharmaceutical industry within new set ups between organizations like us, Academics and the Industry. We will contribute to this project with our expertise and highly flexible approach to challenging projects with the ultimate goal to develop innovative therapies for multiple sclerosis."

About European ScreeningPort:

European ScreeningPort is a public-private-partnership offering fee-for-service small molecule screening to academic institutions. The goal is to provide the missing link in Europe between academic research and the pharmaceutical industry and thus support turning promising results generated in basic research into new therapeutics. European ScreeningPort is a service provider that enables academic research institutes to access its state-of-the-art screening platform, its extensive collection of compounds as well as its sample and data processing. www.screeningport.com.

About NEU²:

The NEU² consortium, including, amongst others, Merck KGaA, Evotec AG, European ScreeningPort GmbH, Bionamics GmbH, and the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf 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 NEU² consortium focuses on the development of novel therapies against neurological diseases with a specific focus on multiple sclerosis. The NEU² consortium is coordinated by Bionamics GmbH ([Bionamics](http://www.bionamics.com)), an independent project management company and founder of NEU².

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