

Ceremony of Signature
of the Agreement
establishing the
European Molecular Biology Laboratory

SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE MEETINGS

held at CERN, Geneva,
on 10 and 11 May 1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(continued)

	<u>page</u>
<u>CEBM/73/4 PV 3</u>	
1. Agenda for the next Meeting of the Conference	30
2. Functions of the Conference and the Laboratory	31
3. Financing of the Laboratory	34
4. Closure of the Session	38

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1. APPOINTMENT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN suggested that Mr A. Freytag (Federal Republic of Germany), Mr R. STAUCH (Switzerland) and Mr J. G. Duncan (United Kingdom) should form the Credentials Committee which would report later.

It was so agreed.

2. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN said that Sweden, although wishing to take part in the Agreement, would have to defer its signature. Only nine States would therefore sign the Agreement at the present ceremony.

Speaking as delegate of Switzerland he welcomed all participants in the Conference, and said that the history of international co-operation in the field of molecular biology was closely linked with CERN. The success of that organisation could but incite Member States to envisage other fields in which such fruitful collaboration could develop.

He paid a tribute to CERN and to its officers who over the past years had done everything to facilitate the work of the European Molecular Biology Conference.

Switzerland, which was devoted to international co-operation, had always been interested in undertakings which enabled schemes which it could not carry out alone to be carried out by joint effort. Molecular biology was a science so complex that no European country could deal with it alone.

The Federal Council, following a request by the European Molecular Biology Organisation which had been set up in 1963, had decided, after consulting Swiss scientific circles and Government Members of CERN, to convene the first European Conference on Molecular Biology which had led to an Agreement being signed on 13 February 1969. It had been decided that the Swiss Confederation should be the depositary State of that Agreement, and it was on the basis of Article II of that Agreement that the Agreement now before the meeting had been drawn up.

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory would be situated in Heidelberg and would have two subsidiary organs, one at Hamburg, which would use the installations of the DESY Laboratory, and the other at Grenoble, which would use the high-flux reactor of the Laue-Langevin Institute.

From that first discussion had emerged an informal meeting of European biologists, with some Americans also, at Ravello near Naples, in August 1963, and from that meeting had come the foundation of EMBO as a private body composed of individual biologists who had been elected on the basis of their own personal qualifications, not of their national allegiances. He thought the motives underlying the decision to create EMBO centred on a general concern about the state of fundamental biological research in Europe. Many of the fundamental discoveries which had led to the previous decade of extraordinarily rapid advance in the field of molecular biology had been made in European laboratories. Increasingly, however, it was the Americans who were making the running, and European biologists were emigrating to the United States of America in numbers sufficient to constitute a serious brain drain. That was due partly to the intrinsic quality of American research and to the much greater supply of money available on the other side of the Atlantic. There were preventable deficiencies on the European side - the somewhat rigid departmental systems still prevailing in many European universities prevented adequate support and funding from being channelled to a new interdisciplinary field which crossed so many traditional boundaries between the classical fields of biology. Research groups in Europe were too small to allow the necessary multiple approaches to be concentrated on a single problem, and the number of large interdisciplinary laboratories in Europe had been extremely small. European scientists were not so much in the habit of travelling in one another's countries, and if they did meet colleagues from another European country it was more often than not at some congress in the United States. Europe seemed to lack the focus and meeting place provided in the United States by laboratories like Cold Spring Harbor and Woods Hole.

The EMBO idea was to try and find ways of repairing that situation and of improving the quality of European biology. Two different ways of doing that had been thought of, the first one was to create an international laboratory, the second to finance fellowships and summer courses, and EMBO had been founded with those two objects in mind. As he had indicated, it was a private body so it needed money, and at the beginning it had not had one penny. For EMBO the good fairy had been the Volkswagen Foundation which had given it a very large grant, three-quarters of a million dollars for a

out in national laboratories, which generally had very limited workshop and engineering facilities. The Laboratory would provide advanced training, accepting post-doctoral fellows and even pre-doctoral fellows from all European universities. Finally, it would be a centre for workshops and advanced courses, as well as for meetings of a more informal kind. Those who were familiar with the American biological scene would be aware of the function performed there by the famous laboratory at Cold Spring Harbor. It was felt that the EMB Laboratory should have a similar place in Europe. The aim was to establish a laboratory which would not be a rival to national institutes, but which would rather complement them and would explicitly organise itself as a service institution, supporting to the best of its ability national programmes in the field.

Such a proposition was bound to lead to many hard discussions. In the first place it could not be cheap, indeed its budget would be a number of times greater than the whole of the rest of the EMBO programme. Then there must certainly be political problems about the site of the Laboratory and about the number of countries ready to support it. Inevitably it took time to sort all that out, but the successful conclusion of that difficult process of negotiation was evident today. Nine governments were ready to sign the Agreement establishing the Laboratory. Although several other members of EMBC did not feel able to sign at present he was happy to say that all of them had expressed the hope that they might be able to do so later. The present occasion was a pleasant one for those who had been involved in the negotiations for a number of years. Today's result was due to many factors and especially to the work and spirit of co-operation of many people and many organisations. He wished to single out several particular debts which EMBO owed. First of all to the Swiss Government. That Government had been responsible for all the excellent arrangements for the present meeting, but it was not the first time that it had acted in that capacity. The Swiss Government had been host on many previous occasions and had taken many initiatives to call the participants together. A very great debt was owed to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany - how great that debt was, delegates could see for themselves if they visited the beautiful site that the Government has provided at Heidelberg for the Laboratory, deep in the forest next to the Max-Planck-Institut für Kernphysik.

He felt that all concerned were deeply grateful to those governments and individuals who had made it possible for the ideas first discussed in Professor Weisskopf's office in CERN at the end of 1962, and later developed by EMBO, to become real. He looked forward to the future collaboration between governments on the one hand and biologists on the other in the new forum of the Laboratory Council which would hold its first meeting during the next month or two. Finally, all looked forward to the practical realisation of an enterprise which it was hoped would be scientifically successful as well as being of material assistance to the biological institutes of the member countries, and which would make its own distinctive contribution to the creation of a more united Europe of the future.

4. ADDRESS BY MR J. LONS

Dr Josef LONS (Federal Republic of Germany) conveyed a message from Professor Ehmke, the Federal Minister for Research and Technology, noting the trends towards interdisciplinary and inter-European collaboration and the need to concentrate Europe's impressive but scattered material and intellectual reserves. It was to be hoped that the Agreement would come into force soon after signature so that the European Laboratory at Heidelberg, the first European organisation to have its formal headquarters in the Federal Republic, could quickly develop its creative capacity.

The Ambassador thanked Mr Kendrew, Mr Voirier and the Swiss Government for their work and support and expressed the hope that Belgium, Greece, Norway and Spain would soon accede to the Agreement.

5. ADDRESS BY MR K. KORZ

Dr Karl KORZ, the Lord Mayor of Heidelberg, welcomed the decision to set up the European Laboratory in Heidelberg, which contains the oldest University on German soil, where for six centuries outstanding intellectual and creative activities had mingled inextricably with great historical events. The atmosphere thus engendered could not fail to be propitious for the future Laboratory.

6. REPORT OF CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Mr DUNCAN, the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, reported that the Committee had found the credentials of the plenipotentiaries of the following nine countries to be in order: Austria, Denmark, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Ad Hoc Working Group

SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE MEETING

held at CERN, Geneva,

on 10 May 1973

President: Mr H. Voirier

Secretary General: Mr J. C. Kendrew

Secretary: Mr M. Delauche

CONTENTS:

1. Meeting of the Bureau
2. Date of the next session of the Conference and Scope of the Conference

NETHERLANDS

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Delegate
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Delegate
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SWITZERLAND

Mr E. ANDRES

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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr S. G. OWEN

Delegate
Second Secretary
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London

Mr J. G. DUNCAN

Delegate
Administrative Secretary
Medical Research Council
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SPAIN

Mr A. DURAN MIRANDA

Delegate
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Mr L. VANDENDRIESSCHE

BUREAU AND SECRETARIAT

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Département politique fédéral
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Vice-President

Mr A. ALLINE
Conseiller d'Ambassade
Service des Affaires scientifiques
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
Paris

Vice-President

Mr C. ZELLE
Ministerialrat
Bundesministerium für
Forschung und Technologie
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Secretary-General

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MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology
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Project Leader of the European
Molecular Biology Laboratory

Secretary

Mr M. DELAUCHE
Administrator
Laboratory Project
Brussels

Administrative Secretary

Miss F. LEENART
Laboratory Project
Brussels

He pointed out that Dutch molecular biologists would welcome the broadening of the scope of the Conference.

The DELEGATE of the UNITED KINGDOM said his Government strongly supported the Netherlands proposal that a working group should be set up, but he wished to emphasize that his Government did not think that support of the proposal need commit anyone to any position taken by that group. Article XI, 4(c) of the Agreement of 1969 called for a decision by the Conference by 2 April 1974 and he emphasized the need for the working group to be set up as soon as possible.

The SECRETARY GENERAL, speaking on behalf of the EMBO Council, said that that body had set up a working group to prepare a document for submission to the present session of the Conference concerning EMBO's view of what the indicative scheme for the General Programme of the Conference should be after 1974. The document had been circulated to the members of EMBO. It was not yet ready for circulation to delegates to the present session as it was hoped to include a statistical breakdown of what had so far been accomplished. The document would be available in a few weeks' time.

Referring to the broadening of the Conference's programme, he felt that the first thing to do would be to find out how EMBO wished to widen its own programme and to what extent governments wished to bring more bodies within its scope. The proposed working group should study those questions. When the Council document was circulated it would be seen that EMBO had itself proposed a widening of its field of influence, not for political reasons but for purely scientific ones.

The DELEGATE of FRANCE said that a small working group set up by his Government had recently considered European molecular biology activities and felt that they should be expanded by widening the scope of EMBO.

The DELEGATE of SWITZERLAND felt that the quality of molecular biological research in Europe should be improved and said that his delegation supported the creation of a working group to consider the broadening of the scope of the Conference.

The DELEGATE of AUSTRIA supported the proposal of the Netherlands delegation and felt that both the scientific and the financial aspects of the broadening of the scope of the Conference should be considered by the proposed working group. The working group should make a distinction between the molecular approach and the normal biological approach.

The PRESIDENT felt that all members agreed that a special working group should be set up and that it should meet before the General Session of the Conference at the beginning of July. The members of the special working group should be governmental scientific and financial experts.

He suggested that the first session of the provisional Council of the Laboratory should be held on 3 and 4 July in Heidelberg.

After a general discussion on the suitability of various dates for the next session of the Conference, the SECRETARY GENERAL suggested that the period 2-5 July could be allotted and that the work could be timetabled on the following basis:

Legal Subgroup	2 and 3 July
Working Party on the Future Programme	2 July and if necessary 3 July morning
Finance Committee of the Conference	3 July afternoon
Finance Committee of the Laboratory	3 July afternoon
Formal Session of the Conference	4 July
Provisional Council of the Laboratory	5 July

It was so agreed.

The DELEGATE of the UNITED KINGDOM suggested that each Member State should be allowed to nominate its member on the working group on the future of the Conference.

He wished to suggest that Mr Andres, leader of the Swiss delegation, should be invited to be chairman of the working group.

It was so agreed.

The fact that the Agreement had been signed in May 1973 instead of August 1972 had entailed minor changes in the budget originally circulated (document CEBM/72/3). The new budget (document CEBM/73/2) entailed no change in total costs and merely represented a 9 months' shift of the costs.

At its next meeting the Ad Hoc Group might like to consider how and when voluntary contributions should be made to the budget, more particularly in the light of cost escalation.

Referring to the question of finance, the Project Leader pointed out that a new Table 5 had been prepared to replace the one already circulated. He would appreciate discussing at a meeting on the following day the question of voluntary contributions and how and when they should be made.

He would be glad if the question of inflation of costs could be discussed although he knew no decision could be taken on that question until the formal session of the Conference in July.

The DELEGATE of FRANCE, referring to the Institute at Grenoble, pointed out that ILL was an independent body and negotiations had taken place between the head of the Laboratory Project and the head of the Grenoble Institute.

The DELEGATE of the NETHERLANDS asked what was the status of DESY in Hamburg.

The SECRETARY GENERAL said that arrangements had been made with the German authorities some time ago for construction work to begin at DESY. For technical reasons it had been easier for construction work to be carried out while major modifications were being made to the synchrotron. The work had not been completed for internal reasons connected with the Federal Republic, but it should be possible now to begin work once more.

Some scientific work was now taking place in DESY and he proposed to appoint a provisional committee within the next few weeks to lay down priorities concerning work there.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

1. AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE

The PRESIDENT suggested the following agenda for the next session of the Conference:

1. Opening of the Session
2. Approval of the minutes of the previous session
3. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group
4. Election of members of the Bureau
5. Election of the Chairman of the Finance Committee
6. Terms of reference of the Secretary General
7. Report of the Working Group on the future of the Conference
8. Standing Orders
9. Relations and links with other organisations:
Letter from European Cell Biology Organisation
10. Miscellaneous

The agenda was approved

The PRESIDENT pointed out that there had been a divergence of opinion in the informal working group which had met the previous evening about the powers of the various organs of EMBC and suggested that the matter should be taken up again when the report of the Working Group was received in perhaps two weeks' time.

It was so agreed.

2. FUNCTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE AND THE LABORATORY

The PRESIDENT suggested that the question of the organisational structure of the Laboratory should be postponed.

The DELEGATE of DENMARK, speaking also for the DELEGATE of SWEDEN, who had left Geneva, said that the two delegations preferred the separation of the functions of the Laboratory and the Conference. The two delegations also agreed with the President's suggestion that the question should be postponed for the time being.

The DELEGATE of the UNITED KINGDOM said his delegation would also prefer the functions of the Laboratory and the Conference to be separated.

The DELEGATE of the FEDERAL REPUBLIC of GERMANY recommended the solution adopted, for instance, in the Agreement establishing the European Molecular Biology Conference, Article IV, 4a) (i) and (ii).

The DELEGATE of SWITZERLAND thought that a precedent already existed; many European organisations, such as ESRO and COST had satisfactorily combined compulsory programmes involving all members with special projects involving only some members. He agreed with the delegate of the Netherlands.

The SECRETARY GENERAL, speaking as Secretary General of EMBO, said that EMBO had always been of the view that its work and the work of EMBC complemented one another. The Laboratory was the natural place for many activities, and close co-operation between EMBO and EMBC was vital. Separate committees which might have conflicting views could be harmful.

The DELEGATE of ITALY said that, since a working party was to be set up to consider the expansion of Conference activities, it would be advisable to postpone a decision on a matter on which the Ad Hoc Group was so divided.

The DELEGATE of SPAIN agreed with the French, German and Swiss delegates; there should be a single Chairman.

The PRESIDENT suggested that, since opinions seemed so far apart, members of the Ad Hoc Working Group might like to consider the matter carefully during the few weeks before the election and send him their suggestions.

It was so agreed.

The DELEGATE of FRANCE pointed out that, under the Agreement, all signatories thereto had to send in their contributions immediately after signature. Delegates should therefore make sure that contributions were despatched immediately upon receipt of the certified copies of the Agreement.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Working Party on the Future Programme, under the Chairmanship of Mr Andres, should have at its disposal all the available documentation to date.

It was so agreed.

With regard to the cost variation index, a simple transposition of the figures for one place to another place would be inaccurate. Inflation differed for different elements; also, the nature of the expenditure at Heidelberg would differ from that of CERN at Geneva.

The DELEGATE of the UNITED KINGDOM asked whether the Provisional Financial Committee of the Laboratory could meet to consider the matter in the time set aside for the Conference in July.

The SECRETARY GENERAL replied that four days of the week were already taken up. If the delegates concerned could stay one more day, the Financial Committee of the Conference could meet on Thursday 5 July and the Provisional Financial Committee of the Laboratory could meet on Friday 6 July.

The DELEGATES of FRANCE and the FEDERAL REPUBLIC of GERMANY pointed out that it was clear from earlier summary records and resolutions that the two Financial Committees should meet on the same day as one another, so that all the delegates concerned with finance could attend both of them.

The SECRETARY suggested that the Project Leader might inform Governments of the total voluntary contributions due from them during the two financial years concerned and ask them for an immediate payment of a percentage of the total. The outstanding balance could then be confirmed and the cost variation calculated. Governments could then decide whether to pay the balance in a single lump sum or in several instalments.

The DELEGATE of FRANCE disagreed. Governmental procedures for making payments were lengthy, and it would be preferable just to send a letter to Governments stating that the Agreement had been signed and that the contributions due thereunder should be paid immediately.

The DELEGATE of SWITZERLAND pointed out that, although Switzerland was prepared to contribute towards the upkeep of the various preliminary organs of the Laboratory, Swiss rules forbade the payment of Government contributions due under international agreements until such time as the constituent organs had been set up and the agreement concerned had been ratified.

It would be necessary for the provisional Council to adopt its Rules of Procedure to be prepared by the Legal Subgroup. Financial questions would also have to be discussed by the Council and a new Executive Secretary appointed.

The SECRETARY GENERAL said that the new Executive Secretary would need a great deal of help. It was hoped to have a Laboratory Office established in Heidelberg one month before the meeting of the provisional Council.

The DELEGATE of the UNITED KINGDOM asked whether the Project Leader needed any further authority in order to engage administrative staff to advance the work of the Laboratory.

The SECRETARY GENERAL said that one of his major preoccupations was to find an adequate successor to Mr Delauche, whose services had been so important. He hoped, however, to come to the meeting of the provisional Council with a recommendation for the successor to Mr Delauche, and he would be grateful if the Council would then consider the matter urgently. He was hoping to recruit further staff, and he emphasised that it would help if Member States would pay their voluntary contributions as soon as possible.

Replying to a question by the delegate of France, the SECRETARY GENERAL said that a successor to Dr Appleyard had had to be appointed at short notice and he (the Secretary General) had been fortunate in obtaining the services of Dr Tooze who had already started work. However, Dr Tooze was facing certain personal problems in assuming his new post at such short notice, and should be allowed a certain amount of flexibility in connection with his move to Heidelberg. Provisional accommodation for the Laboratory staff could be provided immediately thanks to the generosity of the German authorities.

The ADMINISTRATOR of the LABORATORY PROJECT said that he would not leave his post from one day to the other. He would co-operate with the Conference as long as his services were needed.

The PRESIDENT thanked the Administrator of the Laboratory Project.