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**Press
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Frankfurter Innovationszentrum
Biotechnologie

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Regional Economics Minister visits FIZ

Minister for Economic Affairs for Hesse, the federal state in which Frankfurt is located, Dr Alois Rhiel, today visited the Frankfurt Biotechnology Innovation Center (FIZ) to learn about the expansion of Merz Pharmaceuticals GmbH's research activities and the significance of the issuance of a global patent for an isobaric mass tagging technology for measuring innovative biomarkers developed by Proteome Sciences R&D GmbH & Co. KG.

Proteome Sciences benefits from worldwide growth of biomarker market

Thanks to the research unit at FIZ, the UK-based biotechnology group Proteome Sciences plc has succeeded in developing Tandem Mass Tags[®], a platform technology which allows the measurement of disease specific biomarkers with a high degree of accuracy and reproducibility through specific chemical labelling of proteins and peptides from a sample by tagging amino functions with isobaric tandem mass tags. The US patent was issued in November 2007. Patents covering the TMT[®] technologies have been issued in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA.

Dr Peter Schulz-Knappe, board member and Research and Development Director of Proteome Sciences plc, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange, explained the use of the new platform technology. "The distinctive feature is that, using stable molecules enriched with heavy carbon isotopes, we can accurately identify and measure protein biomarkers," he said. "The TMT[®] workflows and applications overcome the bottleneck in biomarker validation and will transform the discovery and routine measurement of protein biomarkers by mass spectrometry reducing the development time of biomarker assays from years to weeks."

Dr Alois Rhiel, Hessian Minister for Economic Affairs, said: "This TMT[®] technology developed by Proteome Sciences at FIZ shows that we in Hesse can tap into new hi-tech markets through internationally networked research, development and production."

The significance of biomarkers for the pharmaceuticals industry is increasing worldwide. According to industry forecasts, the market is likely to quadruple in size to US \$21.2 billion between now and 2012.

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Proteome Sciences will benefit from this market growth so that the creation of further jobs is expected in addition to the 30 employees currently working for the company at FIZ.

FIZ: A key component of Merz's global research network

Merz Pharmaceuticals GmbH, a leading company in the area of Alzheimer's research, also uses FIZ as a strategic location and is constantly expanding its preclinical activities. Its focal areas for research and development are diseases of the central nervous system and cosmetics.

Expenditure for this has been increasing for years. In the financial year 2006-7, research and development expenditure rose 15.4% to €53.2 million, while the number of employees has more than tripled in the last three years. In the same period of time, the number of Phase III projects tripled. More than 70 more science employees were installed in the past year and 30 further new highly-qualified jobs are being created within FIZ.

Dr Martin Zügel, CEO of Merz Pharmaceuticals, explained his company's involvement in FIZ. "National and international research networks are a central factor in the success of our work," he said. "At FIZ we benefit from our close proximity to the university and other institutions."

The Hessian Economics Minister emphasized Merz's private-sector initiative at the Frankfurt location, which — in spite of the company's high degree of internationalization — represents an important indicator of the future capacity of the region's pharmaceutical infrastructure.

Dr Christian Garbe, Managing Director of FIZ Frankfurter Innovationszentrum Biotechnologie GmbH, said the center created an environment in which companies in the life sciences sector could participate in the global boom in proteomic research and the investigation of diseases of the central nervous system.

"In addition to the bespoke laboratories and the ideal infrastructure, FIZ offers optimal conditions for the efficient transfer of technology from neighbouring scientific institutions," he said. "With FIZ we are pursuing further the need for a platform of innovation which is consistently in line with the market."

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Notes to Editors

FIZ Frankfurter Innovationszentrum Biotechnologie

FIZ the Frankfurt Biotechnology Innovation Center, Frankfurt am Main, is a research cluster that works close to industries and hence makes business settlement and cooperation worldwide possible. The successful and active innovation center is characterised by a well balanced tenant structure of both young and established regional and international firms. The mixture of young and established firms is ideal for the support of innovation and commerce. Not only must research be at an exceptional level but management and financial know-how are also essential for success. The owners of the FIZ Frankfurt Biotechnology Innovation Center are the State of Hesse, the City of Frankfurt am Main, and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce Frankfurt am Main. In the national government award for business location, "Germany — Land of ideas", FIZ was commended as a "place for ideas 2007". The FIZ is located in Science City Frankfurt-Riedberg in close proximity to, among others, the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University, two Max-Planck-Institutes and The Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies.
(www.fiz-biotech.de)

Merz Pharmaceuticals

Merz Pharmaceuticals, as a member of Merz Pharma, is an innovative and international healthcare company specializing in the research, development and marketing of pharmaceuticals for the treatment of neurological and psychiatric diseases. Merz developed Memantine, the world's first drug for the treatment of moderate to severe stages of Alzheimer's disease. Among drugs to combat Alzheimer's, Memantine is the second most-often sold in the world. Another area of competence at Merz is clinical and cosmetic dermatology. Along with the pharmaceuticals market, Merz is active in the healthcare sector outside of the pharmacy as well. The Merz Group employs 2,050 employees worldwide. The company achieved revenues of approximately €335 million in the 2006/07 financial year.
(www.merz.de)

Proteome Sciences

Proteome Sciences specialises in proteome research and is working on the identification of protein biomarkers and target proteins. This is accomplished by comparing the protein expression pattern in selected samples in specific conditions (diseased versus healthy). In addition Proteome Sciences is concerned with the development of proprietary tagging technologies in the area of gel-free proteome analysis. The company offers integrated workflows and applications to biotechnological and pharmaceutical industry for the discovery and validation of biomarkers and for the development biomarker assays. Proteome Sciences R&D GmbH & Co. KG is a subsidiary enterprise of the parent company Proteome Sciences plc, which is listed on the London Stock Exchange. Proteome Sciences R&D GmbH & Co. KG was originally a spin-off of the central research unit of the former Hoechst AG and was acquired in 2002 as Xzillion Proteomics GmbH & Co. KG by Proteome Sciences plc.
(www.proteomics.com)