

Editorial

Dear Partners, Researchers and Supporters of NeuroPrion,

Our network has started its second year of cooperation and we are very pleased to send you this first edition of our NewsLetter, concluding also the initial phase of our project, which could be subtitled NeuroPrion-start from scratch.

Within this first year NeuroPrion has successfully organised an important international conference on prion diseases in Europe, laid down the foundation of our Network and defined our research priorities. In the light of our initial experiences, we will strive to improve the network in this coming year.

The launching of the new NeuroPrion website will facilitate our communication between scientific and non-scientific audiences to achieve a level of expertise beyond that which already exists. By the gathering and spreading of available knowledge in the prion field we hope to be able to overcome any upcoming crises, such as BSE transmitted to small ruminants or BSE in Canada, and to avoid future ones related to prions.

Furthermore, the long-term goal of NeuroPrion is to become a global network and as such, to include other European and Non-European researchers in order to share knowledge in the most fruitful way.

On behalf of the management team as well as the editorial team we wish you a joyful and very successful 2005.



Jens Schell



Jean-Philippe Deslys

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In case of questions, comments or suggestions please contact the editorial board:

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NeuroPrion Website: Co-operation & Communication

Our website: <http://www.neuropriion.com/> will be available soon. As it will have different tasks to fulfil and will be aimed at different audiences, it will contain three major parts: a public website, an internal one and one concerning administrative obligations.

Communicating to the Public:

For the public NeuroPrion website, we have accepted the proposal of ResearChannel, a company which has expertise in creating communication websites, dealing especially with European affairs to remodel completely the site. Unfortunately, there has been some delays in drawing up the contract between NeuroPrion and ResearChannel due to the fact that we are still waiting for the permission of the European Commission, in order for the costs to be declared eligible. In the meantime, we are starting to accumulate content for the website. In order to do this as efficiently and quickly as possible, we will require some input from all of you such as official logos, full addresses, names of the scientists involved in NeuroPrion in your institution, publication lists, etc... You will be contacted if we need further information.

Internal Communication & Co-operation:

Concerning the private area, we are using a platform called eDoc, which was developed by the CEA. At present, we are in the final stages of the preparation of the private area. It should be ready to operate in January 2005. This area will be open to NeuroPrion members only and will require a login and a password, which you will receive sometime in January. To benefit of the full potential of this new tool, we will offer short training courses.

The main purpose of this area, will be for the storing and exchange of documents. In addition it will serve other functions such as :

- A private workspace
- An electronic voting module
- An events calendar
- A news area for NeuroPrion members
- A prion library, where you can upload or download the latest scientific articles and search for literature (pdf-format)
- An address book allowing for the creation of lists

Prion2005 in Düsseldorf

After the great success of Prion 2004 in Paris, which was NeuroPrion's 1st international conference including the official launching day of our Network, we are already organising our next event:

Prion 2005: Between fundamentals and society's needs

It will be located in Düsseldorf, Germany and organised in cooperation with the German TSE-research platform, which had their 1st international conference in 2003 in Munich. They will present themselves briefly later in this issue.

Prion 2005 will be held from October 19th to 21st. The venue of the conference is the Congress Center Düsseldorf CCD, which is located in the trade fare area in the North of Düsseldorf, just outside the town center (20 min by public transport)

Further information you will find on our website including already confirmed speakers and online-registration:



→ <http://www.prion2005.com/>

Calls, Scholarships and fellowships

New FP6 calls

→ <http://fp6.cordis.lu/fp6/calls.cfm>

STREP Calls for 2005

Food Priority 5 Food-2004-T5.4.5.3

Deadline 8th of February, 2005 17.00h

Investigating the fundamentals of TSE enabling the rational development of detection and control strategies

The aim will be to focus on the molecular biology and comparative structural characteristics of common TSE strains as well as novel scrapie and BSE strains, in order to establish what defines a 'strain' and what causes the 'species barrier effect'.

Marie Curie Actions 2005

The application for individual driven actions of the Marie Curie Training for 2005 is open. Please find the several deadlines below. For further details and details on host-driven actions and prizes contact the Marie Curie website:

<http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/mobility.htm>

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/indexhtm_en.html:

TSE forum

The German TSE Research Platform – a Brief Portrait

The TSE Research Platform is an association of basically all German TSE researchers; currently, there are more than 250 members, who work on well over 70 prion-related research projects – some of them in the framework of NeuroPrion.

The association was founded in 2001 on initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. According to its statutes, the Platform was set up for a period of 5 years, from July 1st 2001 to June 30th 2006; it is science-driven; i.e. it is independent and autonomous in its activities. A key objective of the Platform is to coordinate the activities of German TSE researchers, to promote networking among them, and to facilitate the exchange of their research results. To this end, the Platform regularly organises national and international meetings and conferences. For example, the response to the “Prion Diseases” conference in Munich 2003 by the scientific community was impressive: about 700 participants from 26 countries attended.

The activities of sample archives are one of the Platform’s prime concerns. All promising research projects are provided with the required prion-containing samples of human and animal origin. The provision of material requires a formal sample request, addressed to the internal scientific advisory board. The request is evaluated in a transparent way according to established scientific criteria. Thus, for the very first time, researchers can turn to a central facility to obtain samples. For example, samples are also available to groups involved in NeuroPrion. Likewise, German researchers can be supplied with relevant samples from the UK by a mutual arrangement between the German TSE Research Platform and the British TSE Archive.

Finally, the Platform plays an important role as the interface between science and the public: The Platform informs the public on potential risks associated with BSE, CJD and other prion-induced diseases, for example via its website www.tse-forum.de. It was through the Platform that reputable experts could respond to numerous inquiries from citizens, politicians, stakeholders, communities and companies. Thus, the Platform aids in alleviating anxieties within the public, as inquiries are responded to quickly and competently. By promoting the rational discourse on prion-induced diseases, the Platform also counteracts the hype often surrounding BSE and CJD.

At present, the Platform and NeuroPrion are organising their first joint international conference (see also article “Prion 2005”).

For more information, please contact: German TSE Research Platform
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Feodor-Lynen-Str. 23
D-81377 München, Germany
Tel.: ++49-89-2180-78020
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www.tse-forum.de

Scientific Events

Prion 2005 – Düsseldorf: October 19 - 21, 2005

Prion 2005: Between fundamentals and society's needs

Organizers: German TSE-Platform & NeuroPrion

NeuroPrion Meeting on the October 18, 2005

Satellite-Meetings of different themes or subprojects are possible, please let us know your requirements as soon as possible and we will inform you about the conditions

→ <http://www.prion2005.com/>

Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies: February 14 -15, 2005

9th annual conference of the Cambridge Healthtech Institute

Venue: Ritz Carlton Corner; Mc Lean, Virginia

→ <http://www.healthtech.com/2005/tse/index.asp>

The New Prion Biology: 7 - 9 April 2005

Basic Science, Diagnosis and Therapy:

II International Symposium, Venezia – Italy

Organizers: Adriano M. Aguzzi and M. Catia Sorgato

→ http://www.istitutoveneto.it/prion_05/index.htm

BSE in Small Ruminants

BSE in Goat possibly detected in France

October 28, 2004

Within an EU wide surveillance programme designed to detect suspicious TSE strains in small ruminants a healthy goat slaughtered in 2002 in France was detected positive differing from the normal scrapie strains. Further investigations of this case including mouse bioassays enforced the announcement of the suspicion while the investigations will be finalised and validated by the Community Reference Laboratory (CRL) for TSEs based in Weybridge, England.

NeuroPrion will assist Europe to spread the necessary information as soon as they are available and allow an effective communication between the different experts. We will be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of our network to handle and avoid future crises, if prion research is supported properly

One of our first activities is the upcoming meeting of the NeuroPrion task force: Ruminant Strains (cf. Inside NeuroPrion).

For reference see EC notes: *(please enter the code as reference)*

IP/04/1324 Commission submits French Research Findings on TSE in a goat to Expert Panel

MEMO/04 Questions and Answers on TSE in goats

Inside NeuroPrion: Subgroup Meetings/Activities

Animal Strain Typing

20.01.2005 in Paris Jouy

WP 2.1: Prevention

Sub-Project: Strains

Task: Ruminant Strains

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Animal models for the strain typing of TSEs in small ruminants. The goal will be to summarise and compare all the available models and to discuss on best practises.

NeuroPrion Research Platform, Fontenay-aux-roses (Paris)

Finally, the moving into the new building dedicated to prion research is almost completed. This unique opportunity will enhance the cooperation of prion researchers worldwide. A total area of almost 6800 m² includes office and laboratory space for foreign researchers as well as for start-up companies. It will offer the unique possibility to welcome short and long-term visitors and to organize under-graduate and graduate training courses including practical work.

The full functioning of this research platform will be another milestone in the progress of our project.

Recently published by the partners



Techniques in Prion Research

Series: Methods and Tools in Biosciences and Medicine,
Lehmann, Sylvain; Grassi, Jacques (Eds.)

ISBN: 3-7643-2415-5 A Birkhäuser book <http://www.springeronline.com/>

Features:

Purification of PrPC and PrPSc / Animal Models of TSEs
Cell Culture Models of TSEs / PrPSc Immunohistochemistry
Western Immunoblotting Techniques / Antibody Production and ELISA
TSE Strain Typing in Mice / Biosafety and Decontamination Procedures
Cell-free Conversion of Prion Proteins / Cytotoxicity of PrP Peptides
Cyclic Amplification of Prion Protein Misfolding

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Scientific articles:

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