

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Swiss Neuroscience Takes Shape Around Lake Geneva

The newly available Campus Biotech in Geneva will host research groups involved in the Human Brain Project and the Blue Brain Project. As a consequence of this change in EPFL's investment plans, the original project to host them in a new building on the Lausanne campus (Neuropolis) has been withdrawn. This reorganization will lead to financial optimization for the consortium, and will allow scientific teams to begin working in the Geneva complex sooner. This is a first key step towards the creation of Lake Geneva's neuroscience hub.

On May 22, 2013, the Wyss Foundation and the Bertarelli family publically announced their purchase of the Sécheron site on the outskirts of Geneva, which they intended to transform into a research complex for neurosciences and biotechnology. The complex, designated as 'Campus Biotech', has been leased in part by the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) and the University of Geneva since July 1, 2013, allowing research groups in fundamental and applied neurosciences to move in progressively. They will be joined by research teams from the Wyss Center in bio- and neuroengineering.

#### HBP and BB at Campus Biotech

The availability of the Campus Biotech, unforeseen at the time that Neuropolis was originally planned, will allow to host an additional newcomer: the scientific and administrative teams of the Human Brain Project (Europe) and the Blue Brain Project (EPFL). Together with the majority of EPFL's Center for Neuroprosthetics, this will mean over 200 researchers and staff from EPFL's Innovation Park and the Life Science buildings in Lausanne could move to the Sécheron site from the start of 2014. Moving the HBP/BB teams to Geneva will allow newly recruited research teams to become operational immediately and also free up EPFL's construction funds for development of teaching and other research infrastructure.

#### Involvement of the Cantons around Lake Geneva

In parallel, the State Council of the Canton of Geneva will be heavily involved in the project, contributing 1 MCHF annually towards rental costs for the Human Brain Project laboratory spaces over the next 30 years, and 5 MCHF of additional funds over a few years. This is one more contribution among many that will help repopulate the majority of the 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> complex at Sécheron with high-end jobs.

In Vaud, plans to build the dedicated 'Neuropolis' building on the campus of the University of Lausanne, which was to be financed by the Confederation, the Canton of Vaud, and private partners, are no longer on the agenda. The parliamentary process is at an advanced stage; however, the State Council of the Canton of Vaud responded to these new circumstances by withdrawing its credit request from the Grand Council of Vaud, as well the related land rights. Nevertheless, the plans for HBP research projects at CHUV and UNIL (University of Lausanne), as well as the program for computational biology will be preserved, in agreement with the intention of the State Council. The State Council reiterates its support to the Human Brain Project, which, at its foundations, directly associates UNIL and CHUV. It will ensure that both institutions have all the required means to set up their HBP research programs, in particular in terms of buildings.

The State Council recognizes that close ties between the Lausanne campuses and the HBP are preserved. In particular, these ties were established with the objective of increased collaboration between the universities in the Lake Geneva region, within the context of the development of a genuine center of competence and internationally recognized research, benefiting the entire region.

### **A public-private partnership**

By facilitating the use of the vast complex, the Bertarelli Family is reiterating its support for cutting-edge research and to the restoration of an economic biotope on the Geneva site. The Rolex Group continues to be associated with the European Human Brain Project and has again confirmed its support for the remodeling of the Swiss and international outreach programs for the general public.

### **International Visibility and Outreach**

This new configuration will be accompanied by the creation of an exhibition space dedicated to national and international outreach on the themes of neuro- and simulation-based sciences. It will be part of the 'Under One Roof' project, designed by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma and scheduled to begin construction by the end of 2013. A mobile interactive space for public outreach will be set up to share the fruits of the research from the Human Brain Project with the public in Europe and around the world.

### **Upcoming deadlines**

October 1, 2013 was the official launch of the Human Brain Project, marking the beginning of its first scientific stage, scheduled to last 30 months until March 2016. This first stage should lead to the development of various computational and neuroscientific platforms in countries that are involved in the project. The teams at the Human Brain Project are currently involved in a recruitment and organizational phase for the European consortium – a key step towards achieving future success.

The next steps in 2013-2014 will involve equipping the site at Sécheron and preparing it to host the scientific teams. The research groups involved in the NCCR (National Center of Competence in Research) in Affective Sciences, coordinated by the University of Geneva, are scheduled to move in to the site in November 2013.

This new organizational step that was initiated in autumn 2013 will clearly define a regional pole in neurosciences. A significant achievement, placing Switzerland strategically in the global quest to unravel the brain, in direct competition with massive international undertakings in this field, such as the "Brain Initiative," announced by President Barack Obama in 2013.

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