

Press Release

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE OF THE HELMHOLTZ CENTRE FOR INFECTION RESEARCH AND THE SAARLAND UNIVERSITY

ADDITIONAL SPACE FOR DRUG RESEARCH IN SAARBRÜCKEN, GERMANY

BREAKING GROUND FOR NEW BUILDING AT HELMHOLTZ-INSTITUTE FOR PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH SAARLAND (HIPS) ON 21 AUGUST

Infection research meets pharmacy: At the Helmholtz-Institute for Pharmaceutical Research Saarland (HIPS), based in Saarbrücken, approximately 150 scientists are committed to the search for new drugs. Their goal is to contribute to the development of new drugs and therapeutic approaches against infectious diseases. The ground-breaking ceremony on Wednesday, 21 August, marks the beginning of the construction of a new research building. Media representatives are invited to attend the greetings at 10:00 and the breaking ground at approximately 11:00. There will be the possibility for press photos and background discussion. Prof. Johanna Wanka, the German Federal Minister of Education and Research, and Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the State Prime Minister of Saarland, will attend the ground-breaking ceremony. Also Prof. Jürgen Mlynek, President of the Helmholtz Association, is expected to be present.



A draft of the new HIPS building, which will unite drug researchers under one roof. © Architekten BDA RDS PARTNER

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Many antibiotics, once celebrated as miracle drugs against infectious diseases, have long lost their potency to the unrelenting rise in antibiotic resistance. As a result, new drugs are desperately needed.

In order to close a gap in drug research, the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) in Braunschweig, Germany, and the Saarland University founded the HIPS in 2009. Almost exactly four years later, the symbolic ground-breaking ceremony on 21 August will be the starting signal for construction of a new HIPS building to begin. On about 4,500 square metres of effective area, three departments and an additional three junior research groups will find new space on the campus of the Saarland University. "So far, our labs are distributed all over the campus," says Prof. Rolf Müller, Managing Director of the HIPS. "In 2015, the new building will be completed, and all staff can then be accommodated under one roof. It will even offer space for new research groups."

The cost, which totals 25 million euros, is funded for a substantial part by the German State of Saarland as well as the European Regional Development Fund. The European Union contribution is aimed at promoting competitiveness in this region. The HIPS' own share of the cost is 10 %.

“Infection research is the HZI’s focus, whereas traditionally the Saarland University has been strong in pharmaceutical research,” says Prof. Dirk Heinz, the HZI’s scientific director. “The combination with HIPS areas of competence is unprecedented in Germany.” The HIPS is Germany’s first publicly funded non-university-affiliated research institute exclusively dedicated to pharmaceutical research. Scientists are screening natural substances for their therapeutic potential. “Bacteria, fungi and plants produce many highly active metabolites, including antibacterials,” explains Müller. When researchers discover an interesting substance, they optimize it for pharmaceutical application using different methods. In addition, HIPS scientists are conducting research into how drugs ultimately arrive at their intended target in the body. To enable drugs to cross biological barriers, they develop drug transporters.

“Saarland University is among the best universities in Germany when it comes to pharmaceutical research. With the new building, novel interesting perspectives will open up for junior researchers,” says Saarland University’s President Prof. Volker Linneweber.

Media representatives are invited to attend the ceremony on the construction site in Stuhlsatzenhausweg. Parking is possible in the car park at Stuhlsatzenhausweg – Entrance Uni Ost. For additional questions, please contact the HZI Public Relations Department at (+49) 531-6181-1401 or by email at: presse@helmholtz-hzi.de.

The Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI)

Scientists at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research in Braunschweig, Germany, are engaged in the study of different mechanisms of infection and of the body’s response to infection. Helping to improve the scientific community’s understanding of a given bacterium’s or virus’ pathogenicity is key to developing effective new treatments and vaccines.
www.helmholtz-hzi.de

The Helmholtz-Institute for Pharmaceutical Research Saarland (HIPS)

The Helmholtz-Institute for Pharmaceutical Research Saarland (HIPS) is a branch of the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) Braunschweig and was jointly founded in 2009 by the HZI and the University of the Saarland. The researchers are specifically searching for new drugs to fight infectious diseases, optimize them for human use, and conduct research into how they can best be delivered to their target destination in the body.

Saarland University

Saarland University has earned an international reputation for its research in computer science and informatics and for its activities in the life sciences and nanosciences. The university campus in Saarbrücken is home to more than 600 research scientists in the physical sciences and the life sciences, particularly medicine, pharmaceutical science and biology. The university is also distinguished by close ties to France and its strong European focus.
www.uni-saarland.de/