

## IMB's René Ketting elected to EMBO membership

**7 May 2014.** *The European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) has added 106 outstanding life sciences researchers to its membership, including René Ketting, a Scientific Director at the Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB). Ketting's research on gene silencing by RNA molecules has implications for both organismal development and disease. Prof. Ketting joined IMB and Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz in 2012.*

René Ketting is a leading expert on the biology of non-coding RNAs (ncRNAs). His research group uses *C. elegans* and zebrafish as model systems to study mechanisms of development and disease, focusing on three specific questions in epigenetics: how are ncRNAs able to silence the expression of certain genes, how do they regulate gene activity by changing chromatin (the way DNA is packaged), and how do they stop transposons, short bits of DNA that can move within the genome. Transposon movement can impact the stability of genetic material and cause mutations, so understanding how ncRNAs prevent it is particularly important for genome integrity.

Ketting's election to EMBO membership comes as the organisation is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014. "In the past decades, many of the concepts, techniques and insights of molecular biology have been applied to fundamental questions in other disciplines of the life sciences," EMBO Director Maria Leptin said in a prepared statement. "Molecular explanations are now emerging for the origins and functions of complex systems like the brain and the living world around us. We wanted to reflect more of these exciting developments in our membership."



Prof. Ketting has been an EMBO Young Investigator since 2007. That same year he also received a prestigious European Research Council Starting Grant. He was awarded the FEBS Anniversary Prize in 2008. As a full EMBO member, he will now provide suggestions and feedback on the activities of the organisation, serve on selection committees for EMBO programmes, and mentor young scientists. Previously at the Hubrecht Institute in Utrecht, the Netherlands, René Ketting's research group is now based at IMB, and he is also a professor in the Faculty of Biology at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz.

Further information about René Ketting's research can be found at [www.imb.de/ketting](http://www.imb.de/ketting).

### About the Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH

The Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH (IMB) is a centre of excellence in the life sciences that was established in 2011. Research at IMB concentrates on three cutting-edge areas: epigenetics, developmental biology, and DNA repair. The institute is a prime example of a successful collaboration

between public authorities and a private foundation. The Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation has dedicated € 100 million for a period of 10 years to cover the operating costs for research at IMB, while the state of Rhineland-Palatinate provided approximately € 50 million for the construction of a state-of-the-art building. For more information about IMB please visit [www.imb.de](http://www.imb.de)

### **About the Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation**

The Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation is an independent, non-profit organisation committed to the promotion of the medical, biological, chemical, and pharmaceutical sciences. It was established in 1977 by Hubertus Liebrecht (1931-1991), a member of the shareholder family of the company Boehringer Ingelheim. Through its PLUS 3 Perspectives Programme and Exploration Grants, the foundation supports independent group leaders; it also endows the internationally renowned Heinrich Wieland Prize as well as awards for up-and-coming scientists. The foundation has granted € 100 million over a period of ten years to finance the scientific activities of the Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB). For more information about the foundation and its programmes, please visit [www.boehringer-ingelheim-stiftung.de](http://www.boehringer-ingelheim-stiftung.de)

### **Press contact for further information**

Dr Ralf Dahm, Director of Scientific Management  
Institute of Molecular Biology gGmbH (IMB)  
Ackermannweg 4, 55128 Mainz, Germany  
Phone: +49 (0) 6131 392 1455  
Fax: +49 (0) 6131 392 1421  
Email: [press@imb.de](mailto:press@imb.de)