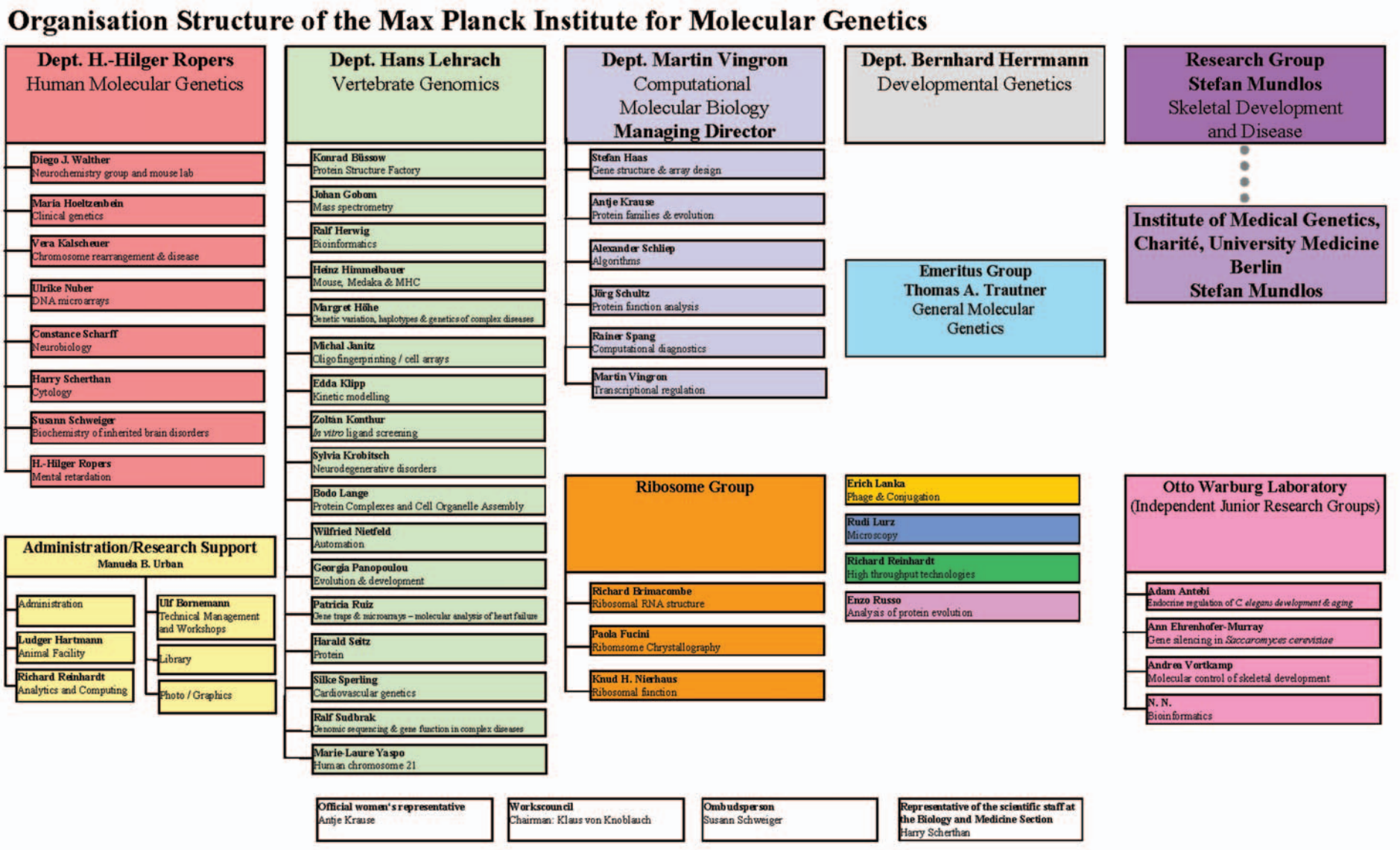
Table of Contents

Organisation Structure of the Max Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics



The Max Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics

Mission

Research at the MPIMG concentrates on genome analysis of man and other organisms to contribute to a global understanding of many of the biological processes in the organism, and to provide a basis to elucidate the mechanism behind many human diseases. It is the overall goal of the combined efforts of all MPIMG's groups to gain new insights into the development of diseases on a molecular level, thus contributing to the development of cause-related new medical treatments.

Development of the institute

The Max Planck Institute for Molecular Genetics (MPIMG) was founded in 1964 with the appointment of Heinz-Günther Wittmann and Heinz Schuster as heads of department, followed by the appointment of Thomas Trautner in 1965. At this time, the research of the institute was focussing on DNA replication and gene regulation in bacteria, bacterial phage and fungi (departments Schuster and Trautner) and on the structure, function and evolution of ribosomes which were central to the work of H.-G. Wittmann.

In 1970, the three departments, as well as four independent junior research groups (the future Otto Warburg Laboratories) moved into the new premises of the institute situated in the Ihnestraße, Berlin-Dahlem. After the sudden death of H.G. Wittmann in 1990 and the retirement of H. Schuster in 1995, the appointments of Hans Lehrach (1994, Dept. of Vertebrate Genomics), and Hans-Hilger Ropers (Dept. of Human Molecular Genetics, full-time since 1997) induced a major shift in the scientific orientation of the institute. Following the retirement of T. Trautner in 2000, Martin Vingron was appointed as head of the new Department of Computational Molecular Biology. At the same time, Stefan Mundlos was jointly appointed by the Humboldt University of Berlin and the Max Planck Society as head of the Institute of Medical Genetics at the Charité and of an independent research group at the MPIMG. Together with the Free University of Berlin, Bernhard Herrmann has been appointed professor at the university and director at the institute in 2003, forming the fourth department.

Currently three junior research groups work at the institute. A newly created junior research group will start in 2004 when the others are due to leave.

Research concept

Genome research, the systematic study of genes and genomes, has changed the way in which research in molecular genetics is pursued. The focus and composition of the MPI for Molecular Genetics reflects this development. Large scale genome research (Dept. Lehrach) generates the tools and information to understand the function of most or all genes of man and other organisms. Human molecular genetics (Dept. Ropers) searches for disease genes and their biological function. Computational molecular biology (Dept.

Vingron) exploits the generated data to better understanding of biological and disease processes. The newly established Dept. of Developmental Genetics (Dept. Herrmann) uses the systematic functional analysis for understanding developmental mechanisms.

The institute pursues a number of large scale projects. Probably the most prominent national project is the German National Genome Network (NGFN), where all departments of the institute participate and collaborate with each other. Other prominent projects include a number of EU projects, participation in several projects of the German Ministry of Science as well DFG "Sonderforschungsbereiche".

With this involvement in national and international research projects as well as by virtue of the research output of the institute, the MPIMG is perceived internationally as a stronghold of genome and genetics research in Germany. The publications coming from the institute document the international competitiveness of the institute. Maintaining this status in the future will require continuing technological innovation, close co-operation with the universities and, in particular, their medical schools, and ongoing integration between genome research and genetics, as well as between experimental and computational biological research. These are the means by which research excellence shall be maintained and further strengthened in the future.

Bernhard Herrmann, Director
Hans Lehrach, Director
H.-Hilger Ropers, Director
Martin Vingron, Director