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# BIO Deutschland: Independent Biotechnology Industry Organisation Founded

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## BIO Deutschland: Independent Biotechnology Industry Organisation Founded

29 October 2004 Berlin - Leading companies from the German biotechnology sector have established a new and independent industry association: the Biotechnologie-Industrie-Organisation Deutschland - or BIO Deutschland.

Whether the issue was the stem cell debate, the new Genetic Engineering Act or the Bio-Patent Directive - many entrepreneurs and managers were all but satisfied with the previous public perception of the interests and possibilities of the German biotech industry. Now BIO Deutschland is set to channel and focus all efforts that promote "the development of an innovative industry sector on the basis of modern life sciences".

Amongst the founding members of BIO Deutschland are widely renowned names such as listed MediGene AG and MorphoSys AG from Martinsried or November AG from Erlangen. Others include Atugen (Berlin), CellGenix (Freiburg), Brain (Zwingenberg), Idea and Willex (both Munich), 4SC (Martinsried) or Analyticon Discovery (Potsdam). Prof. Dr. Horst Domdey, CEO of Bavarian BioM AG and speaker of the working circle of German BioRegions, was elected as founding chairman of the new organization. He was readily available to assist at the "birth" to meet the legal requirements of the set up of the association. At the beginning of December he will be replaced by the first regularly elected board. The association, which was brought to life in mid-September, is seated in Berlin. Only recently BIO Deutschland set up office in the 'berlinbiotechpark' under the administrative management of Dr. Pablo Serrano.

What are the aims of BIO Deutschland? First of all to become the voice of the German biotechnology industry sector, as stressed by Dr. Peter Heinrich, CEO of MediGene AG and one of the association's founders.

Amongst other measures the establishment of the association as an independent representation of the interests of German biotechnology companies is to facilitate and improve the communication with national and international politics, since the biotechnology sector is an important pillar for Germany's global competitiveness.

How important it is to be able to rely on the right political framework can be seen in the current debate on the controversial Genetic Engineering Act, which will only scare agri-biotechnology away from Germany. The high-tech products developed by biotech companies - whether they are medicaments, genetically engineered

plants or novel biological manufacturing processes for the chemical industry - contribute decisively to the value creation in Germany, which is traditionally lacking natural resources, adds Dr. Holger Zinke, CEO of Brain AG. That is why it is even more important to network all relevant activities - a goal that BIO Deutschland will increasingly work for.

BIO Deutschland purposely calls for the co-operation of all parties that are dedicated to supporting the interests of the German biotech industry. Alongside the companies the association particularly calls upon the BioRegions to sign up for membership. This way, activities are to be channelled to render them more efficient. The new organization will also work closely together with the two already existing biotechnology industry associations, DIB and VBU, both located in Frankfurt/Main. In contrast to BIO Deutschland both of them are not fully independent. As sub-units of larger organizations, and without legal capacity of their own they have to mind the interests and particularities of their parent organizations. Until only recently several of BIO Deutschland's founding members sat on the board of the Association of German Biotech Companies (VBU), which in turn is part of the charitable Dechema e.V. also based at Frankfurt. Since the promotion of a particular industry sector is hardly compatible with the charitable status the VBU board saw itself increasingly limited in its scope of action and consequently wholly resigned in mid-October.

Under the new umbrella of BIO Deutschland the German biotechnology sector will make its voice heard more proactively and decisively, according to Prof. Dr. Peter Buckel, CEO of Berlin-based Atugen AG. After all this is not just about creating the right business location or financing conditions but about raising the general consciousness. The German biotechnology industry is developing innovative products for the benefit of humans and the environment, to help maintain in the long term, a high living standard in central Europe whilst staying competitive on a global level.

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