

**E**UROPEAN  
**S**CIENCE  
**F**OUNDATION

SETTING SCIENCE AGENDAS FOR EUROPE

# The Origin of Man, Language and Languages (OMLL)

An ESF EUROCORES (EUROpean COLlaborative RESearch) programme

[www.esf.org/omll](http://www.esf.org/omll)

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# About the European Science Foundation (ESF)



Ca. 80 Member Organisations in 30 countries, beyond the European Union.

- Research funding organisations
- Research performing organisations
- Academies

# About ESF

- Established 1974
- Independent, non-governmental
- Offices in Strasbourg and Brussels
- Budget: 40M€
- Networking Budget: 1-3B€
- Covering all research domains



# Mission

To provide a common platform for our Member Organisations in order to:

- » Advance European research
- » Explore new directions for research at the European level



Through our activities, we serve the needs of the European research community in a global context.

# Implementation

The ESF mission will be achieved via three approaches:

- Science Strategy
- **Science Synergy**
- Science Management



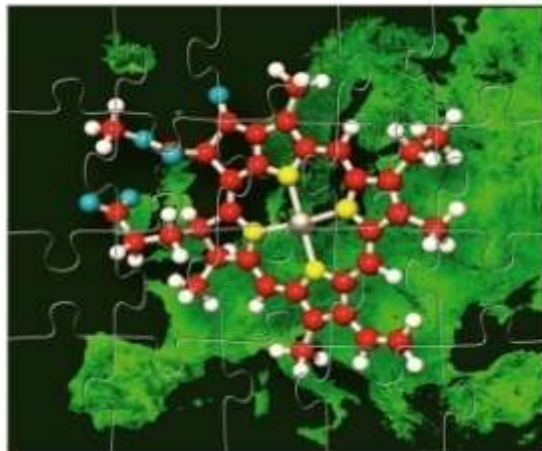
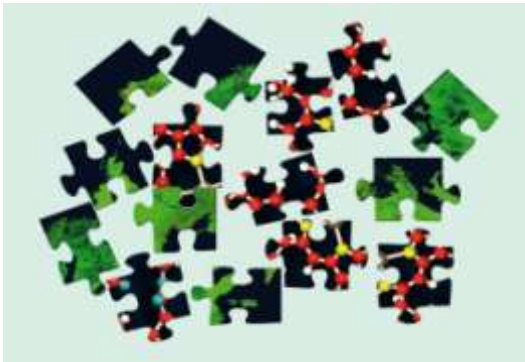
# Science Synergy

## Joining national funding mechanisms at the European level;

- ESF Conferences
- ESF Networking Programmes
- **EUROCORES - European Collaborative Research**



# EUROCORES (**EURO**pean **CO**llaborative **RE**search) programmes



Researcher-led co-operations allowing scientists to conduct their research “at the bench” together

Funding agencies join forces

Combat fragmentation





## EUROCORES - Main Features

- **Multi-national research projects with researchers from at least 3 different participating countries**
- **European competition**
- **Funding remains national**
- **ESF supports management, coordination and networking activities**
- **Provides flexible framework for collaboration of national funding agencies**
- **Investigator driven**

# The Origin of Man, Language and Languages (OMLL)



The OMLL programme brings together research teams from genetics, neurosciences, (paleo-)archaeology, cognitive science, linguistics and AI around six themes:

Language and Archaeology

Language and Brain

Language and Genes

Language Acquisition and Language Universals

Language and Animal Communication

Language Evolution and Computer Modeling

[www.esf.org/omll](http://www.esf.org/omll)





## OMLL - Main Features

- **New research budget: 6 M€**
- **Number of participating countries: 12**
- **Number of Individual Projects: 43**
- **Running time: 2003-2007**



# OMLL – Participating funding organizations



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



CENTRE NATIONAL  
DE LA RECHERCHE  
SCIENTIFIQUE



Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research



Vetenskapsrådet



SUOMEN AKATEMIA

Danish Agency for Science  
Technology and Innovation  
Ministry of Science  
Technology and Innovation



mec.es

**FCT** Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia  
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR



Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche



Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft

DFG



FWO  
VLAANDEREN

## OMLL – Projects (1)



- ***Language and genes of the greater Himalayan Region***  
Guido Barbujani, Peter de Knijff, Mark Jobling
- ***From symbols to language***  
Paul-Louis van Berg, Francesco d'Errico
- ***Action gesture and words in a developmental and evolutionary perspective***  
Eva Berglund, Virginia Volterra, Domenico Parisi, Giacomo Rizzolatti
- ***Early diffusion of domestic bovids in the Middle East and Europe***  
Jean-Denis Vigne
- ***The berber and the Berber: genetic and linguistic diversity***  
Jean-Michel Dugoujon, Pedro Moral Castrillo
- ***Categorical perception and its role in the evolution of language***  
Joël Fagot
- ***Orofacial control in communication in human and non human primates***  
Leonardo Fogassi, Jean-Louis Heim, Jean-Luc Schwartz, CNRS, Jacques Vauclair
- ***Mindreading and the emergence of human communication***  
Vittorio Gallese, Manuel García-Carpintero, François Recanati
- ***The evolution of language: evidence from typology, ontogenesis and computational modeling***, Chris Sinha
- ***Shared mechanisms for speech and gesture recognition?***  
Luciano Fadiga



## OMLL – Projects (2)



- **The prehistory of Amazonian languages**  
*Alf Hornborg*
- **The cultural self-organisation of cognitive grammar**  
*Luc Steels, Cristiano Castelfranchi, Peter Dominey*
- **The emergence of grammar in the brain**  
*Itziar Laka, Marina Nespor*
- **Pioneers of Island Melanesia**  
*Robert A. Foley, Stephen C. Levinson, Eva Lindström, Mark Stoneking*
- **Brain dynamics of language processing and acquisition**  
*Risto Näätänen*
- **Early word segmentation and representation**  
*Thierry Nazzi*
- **Language, culture, and genes in Bantu**  
*Jaume Bertranpetit, Mark Stoneking, Lolke J. van der Veen*
- **Language acquisition by children and language evolution**  
*Sophie Kern, Inge Zink*
- **Emergence and flow of gene lineages and languages along the steppe belt**  
*André Chaventre, Richard Villems,*
- **The origins of primate semantic and syntactic abilities,** *Ronald Noë*
- **East meets West. Linguistic and genetic comparison of modern Eurasian populations.** *François Jacquesson, Antti Sajantil*



## OMLL - Events (1)



### **First OMLL Conference**

3-6 April 2004, Leipzig, Germany

### **Workshop "Evolving communication: from action to language"**

13-14 May 2004, Siena, Italy

### **Virtual Workshop "What do Mirror Neurons mean?"**

15 November 2004 - 13 March 2005

### **Workshop "Early word segmentation: a cross-linguistics approach taking advantage of Europe's Linguistic**

25 -26 February 2005, Paris, France

### **"Phylogeny and Ontogeny of Human Communication"**

2-4 June 2005, Ferrara, Italy

### **"Languages and genes: recent work and emerging results"**

22-25 September 2005, Aussois, France





## OMLL - Events (2)

**“Exploring the potential of Eco-cultural Niche Modeling for reconstructing the geography of past human populations”**

22-26 September 2005, Les Eyzies, France

**“Language and Genes in East Asia/Pacific”**

11-13 December 2006, Uppsala, Sweden

**“VOCOID, VOcalisation, COmmunication, Imitation and Deixis in infant and adult human and non-human primates”**

14-16 May 2007, Grenoble, France

**OMLL Result Presentation “Human Language Dynamics”**

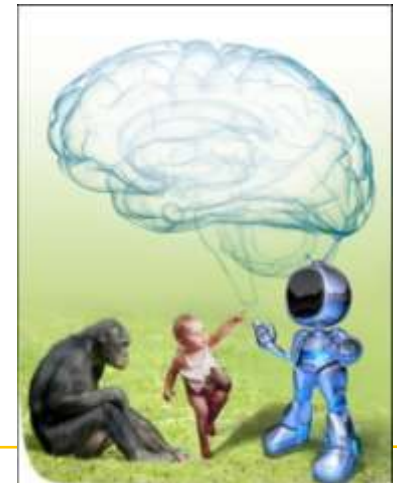
16-20 July 2007, Erice, Italy

**Workshop “Migrations”**

5 -7 September 2007, Porquerolles, France

**OMLL Final Conference**

12-14 December 2007, Rome





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## Currently under Development: BABEL

**The new EUROCORES programme BABEL: Better Analyses Based on Endangered Languages** is currently under development.

The main purpose of the programme is to promote research on underdescribed endangered languages - both spoken and signed - that aims at changing and refining our ideas about linguistic theory in general.

**If all goes well,  
Launch: March 2008  
Deadline for Outline Proposals:  
May 2008**

