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## **NEW GERMAN-ISRAELI LABORATORY INAUGURATED AT THE WEIZMANN INSTITUTE**

**REHOVOT, ISRAEL—March 5, 2014**—On Tuesday, March 4, 2014, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Max Planck Society and the Weizmann Institute of Science to inaugurate the Max Planck – Weizmann Laboratory for Experimental Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Neurogenetics. The agreement was officially signed at the Weizmann Institute by Prof. Dr. Peter Gruss, President of the Max Planck Society, Prof. Daniel Zajfman, President of the Weizmann Institute, Dr. Ludwig Kronthaler, General Secretary of the Max Planck Society, and Prof. Haim Garty, Vice President of the Weizmann Institute.

Prof. Alon Chen of the Weizmann Institute of Science will serve as head of the new lab.

The laboratory will address one of the looming issues of this century: the causes of cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and neurological disorders. Some 450 million people worldwide suffer from some form of mental illness, and it is becoming increasingly clear that these disorders arise from a complex interplay between genetics and environment. The field of neuropsychiatry attempts to untangle this relationship, to understand the process by which genetic makeup and variations in physical brain structure lead to particular behaviors or mental illness.

Researchers from both institutes will be directly addressing such complex psychiatric disorders as depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, and autism, using a wide range of multidisciplinary research methods, from the genomic and biochemical to the clinical. According to the agreement, the laboratory will support joint research projects between scientists at the two institutes, host joint seminars and symposia, arrange exchanges of visiting scientists and students, and create opportunities for research students to get joint training.

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Left to right: Prof. Dr. Peter Gruss, Prof. Alon Chen, and Prof. Daniel Zajfman.

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*The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, is one of the world's top-ranking multidisciplinary research institutions. The Institute's 2,700-strong scientific community engages in research addressing crucial problems in medicine and health, energy, technology, agriculture, and the environment. Outstanding young scientists from around the world pursue advanced degrees at the Weizmann Institute's Feinberg Graduate School. The discoveries and theories of Weizmann Institute scientists have had a major impact on the wider scientific community, as well as on the quality of life of millions of people worldwide.*