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Media Release

Appeal to international investors: Stop patents on chimpanzees!

Call for clear ethical standards

Munich, 21 November 2013 A joint letter from twelve organisations sent to investors in companies filing patents on genetically engineered chimpanzees was published today. Companies filing patents on genetically engineered great apes include Altor BioScience (US), Bionomics (Australia) and Intrexon (US). Research conducted at the European Patent Office in Munich shows that five patents claiming genetically engineered great apes have already been granted to some of these companies, and a dozen further patent applications have been filed. The companies concerned should withdraw their claims on animals and not apply for any similar patents. In the letter, the organisations call on the investors in these companies to make sure that clear ethical standards are in place. Research identified the contact details of around 40 investors. Amongst these are banking institutions such as HSBC Bank, UBS, JP Morgan, Citicorp und BNP Paribas.

In the letter, the organisations make an appeal to investors to that effect: "Please help to stop patents on animals and especially on great apes. Patents on animals can create commercial incentives to produce and market these animals just for profit. Such patents should be outlawed internationally. Please contact the companies mentioned and ask for the implementation of clear ethical standards."

It is a joint activity of the Deutscher Tierschutzbund, Gen-ethical Network (GeN), GeneWatch UK, Gesellschaft für ökologische Forschung, No Patents on Life!, Menschen für Tierrechte - Bundesverband der Tierversuchsgegner e. V., die Schweizerische Arbeitsgruppe Gentechnologie (SAG), Schweizer Tierschutz (STS), Tasso e.V., Testbiotech and Wild Chimpanzee Foundation.

The letter was written at the same time as oppositions were filed at the European Patent Office. Meanwhile there has been a written response from one of the patent holders. Intrexon will carry on the fight to keep its patent.

Contact: Christoph Then, Tel. 0049 151 54638040, info@testbiotechn.org

Further information about the letter and the patents already granted:
www.testbiotech.org/en/investors_chimpanzees

Further Informations on the organisations:

albert-schweitzer-stiftung.de

www.keinpatent.de

www.gen-ethisches-netzwerk.de

www.gentechnologie.ch

www.genewatch.org/

www.oekologische-forschung.de

www.tasso.net

www.tierschutzbund.de

www.tierrechte.de/

www.tierschutz.com

www.testbiotech.org

www.wildchimps.org/

Further Informations: Great Ape Projekt greatapeproject.de/