



Jane Goodall Institut - Deutschland



SCHWEIZER TIERSCHUTZ STS



Albert Schweitzer

Stiftung für unsere Mitwelt

## Media Release

### Success for opposition against patent on 'humanised' apes

Patent holder to withdraw controversial claims

**6. July 2015 / US company Altor-BioScience is to withdraw patent claims covering genetically engineered chimpanzees. The announcement has been made prior to a public hearing on oppositions against the patent (Patent EP1409646) on 7 and 8 July at European Patent Office (EPO) in Munich. The company still wants to keep its claims covering genetically engineered mice and rats. The opponents consider these claims to be morally unacceptable since such patents can provide incentives to carry out animal experiments for commercial reasons.**

In 2013, thirteen organisations from Germany, Switzerland and Great Britain filed a joint opposition against the patent held by Altor, which covered primates, in particular chimpanzees that are manipulated with human DNA and intended for production of antibodies. The opponents are Albert Schweitzer Stiftung fuer unsere Mitwelt, Deutscher Tierschutzbund, Gen-ethisches Netzwerk (GeN), GeneWatch UK, Gesellschaft für oekologische Forschung, Jane Goodall Institute (Germany), No Patents On Life!, Menschen für Tierrechte, Pro Wildlife, Schweizerische Arbeitsgruppe Gentechnologie (SAG), Schweizer Tierschutz (STS), Testbiotech and the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation (WCF, Germany).

“Patents on great apes are an affront to humans and a violation of animal dignity. That is why the withdrawal of Altor-BioScience is an important success,” says Christoph Then of Testbiotech, “patents on rats and mice cannot be justified by medical needs and are not acceptable from an ethical point of view. Just because a company is producing pharmaceuticals that does not give them the moral right to claim a patent on animals.”

Testbiotech recently published a report showing that patents and market interests in genetically engineered animals are factors driving the increasing number of animal experiments. To stop companies from making profits from animal suffering, Testbiotech is appealing to investors such as banks to set clear standards for ethical investment.

Between 2012 and 2014, Testbiotech together with several other organisations filed four oppositions against patents on genetically engineered chimpanzees, triggering various reactions from the companies concerned. Some months ago, the Australian company Bionomics announced it would step back from claims covering genetically engineered animals. In contrast, the US company Intrexon, which holds two European patents on great apes which are manipulated with DNA derived from insects, wants to uphold its patents. A public hearing on the opposition against the patents held by Intrexon will take place on 29 September at the EPO in Den Haag.

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**Further information:**

Patent as granted: [www.testbiotech.org/sites/default/files/EP1409646\\_monkey\\_Altor.pdf](http://www.testbiotech.org/sites/default/files/EP1409646_monkey_Altor.pdf)

Text of the opposition: [www.testbiotech.de/en/node/768](http://www.testbiotech.de/en/node/768)

Report about investments in animal suffering: [www.testbiotech.org/node/1266](http://www.testbiotech.org/node/1266)

**Further information about participating organisations:**

[www.wildchimps.org](http://www.wildchimps.org)

[www.tierschutz.com](http://www.tierschutz.com)

[www.prowildlife.de](http://www.prowildlife.de)

[albert-schweitzer-stiftung.de](http://albert-schweitzer-stiftung.de)

[www.tierschutzbund.de](http://www.tierschutzbund.de)

[www.janegoodall.de/](http://www.janegoodall.de/)

[www.tierrechte.de/](http://www.tierrechte.de/)

[www.keinpatent.de](http://www.keinpatent.de)

[www.gen-ethisches-netzwerk.de](http://www.gen-ethisches-netzwerk.de)

[www.oekologische-forschung.de](http://www.oekologische-forschung.de)

[www.testbiotech.org](http://www.testbiotech.org)

[www.gentechnologie.ch](http://www.gentechnologie.ch)

[www.genewatch.org/](http://www.genewatch.org/)