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Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global  
Etikkrådet for Statens pensjonsfond utland  
Postboks 8008 Dep  
N-0030 Oslo  
Norway

open letter

München, 27 April 2015

Dear Sir or Madam

Invitation to a Testbiotech conference on patents on life, genetic engineering and animal welfare

First of all, please let me introduce our organisation. Testbiotech was founded to monitor trends and assess risks in modern biotechnology. We promote diverse, critical and informed discussions on genetic engineering and biotechnology. The expertise we provide is independent of industry and is aimed at promoting informed public discussion and choice. (For more information please see [www.testbiotech.org](http://www.testbiotech.org)).

On 17 June 2015, we are holding a conference on “The Patented Ape: New methods in genetic engineering, patents on life and the protection of humans and animals“, in Berlin, Germany. As ethical investment policies are on the agenda, we would very much like to invite you to attend this conference. For details please see the programme attached.

One of our main topics at the conference will be patents on animals used in experimental research. We are concerned that the European Patent Office in Munich has already granted around 1500 patents on animals used in biotechnology. Some of them even claim chimpanzees:

- EP1409646 held by Altor BioScience, USA, claims chimpanzees with a genetically engineered immune system;
- EP1364025 held by Bionomics, Australia, claims chimpanzees with a manipulated genome making them more likely to suffer

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Institut für unabhängige  
Folgenabschätzung in  
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**Sitz des Vereins:**  
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**Vereinsregister:**  
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VR 202119  
Als gemeinnützig  
anerkannt

from cancer, and EP 1852505 also held by Bionomics, Australia claims chimpanzees genetically engineered to suffer from epilepsy;

- EP 1456346 and EP 1572862 held by Intrexon, USA, both claim chimpanzees genetically engineered with synthetic DNA originating from insects.

Other companies heavily engaging in filing patents on genetically engineered animals include Novartis, Hoffmann La Roche and Pfizer. As you can see from our programme, we will be presenting a report on the investors active in this field, including your own banking institute. Our research has shown that the Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global (GPFG) is amongst those financial institutions that have to carry a share of the responsibility in this context. The GPFG is a major investor in three of the largest pharmaceutical companies, which own many patents on animals. For more details please see below.

We strongly believe that animals are our fellow creatures and, as such, they should be treated with the respect they deserve. Allowing patents on animals means that incentives are provided to conduct animal experiments for commercial reasons. Nobody should be investing to make a profit from animal suffering. And, more generally, animals should not be treated as if they were technical inventions. For this reason patents on animals, especially those claiming mammals or even great apes, should neither be filed by companies nor granted by patent offices.

Since you are one of the investors in this field we would very much welcome your participation at our conference. We are convinced that your bank is ready to play a constructive role in this dialog, helping to find constructive answers to the problems as outlined. Since we are very much aware of the rapid innovation and new applications in this field, we feel that it is vital to maintain and uphold high ethical standards in this field of investment. Please give us your point of view and take part in our discussions. We would also very much appreciate your comments on the findings from our research. If possible, please let us know your comments and notification of attendance at the conference till 1 June 2015. We look forward to your response.

With kind regards



Dr. Christoph Then, Executive Director, Testbiotech

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**Annex:**

Overview on affiliations between Government Pensions Fund and some relevant pharmaceutical companies

- **Novartis**

GPFG is the 4rth-largest holder of Novartis shares, owing USD 4.8 billion worth of shares (1,9%) in 2014.

- **La Roche**

GPFG is the second largest shareholder of La Roche, with USD 3.8 billion worth of shares (1,63%) in 2013.

- **Pfizer**

GPFG is also a key shareholder of Pfizer, with USD 1,6 billion worth of shares (0,83 %) in 2014.

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