

## Press Release No. 63 | 7. December 2012 Three New Research Units, One New Clinical Research Unit

### From the Cultural Difference to Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) will fund three new Research Units and one new Clinical Research Unit. This was decided by the DFG Senate during its 2012 December meeting in Bonn. The purpose of the collaborations is to offer researchers the possibility to pursue current and pressing issues in their subject areas and to establish innovative work directions.

Like all DFG Research Units, the new units will be interdisciplinary and span multiple locations. They will pursue methodologically innovative approaches and ask fundamental questions in their respective disciplines.

The three new Research Units will receive approximately 5.3 million euros over the next three years; the DFG will thus fund a total of 189 Research Units. In the initial three-year funding period, the new Clinical Research Unit will receive approximately 2.1 million euros. The DFG is thus currently supporting a total of 31 Clinical Research Units.

### The new units in detail (alphabetically sorted by host university):

The software of smartphones, navigation aids or driving assistance systems in cars is constantly evolving due to regular updates and is thus adapting to new situations and applications. The Research Unit "**Controlling Concurrent Change (CCC)**" will examine the challenges the independent software updates will face due to an increasingly openly interconnected future, and how these challenges can be met. The individual applications compete with each other for sufficient resources, as the integration of a variety of subsystems and applications on a computer platform creates ever more complex structures and relationships. This creates another problem, that is, how to avoid the adverse effects of specific updates or new installations on the whole computer system or other software programmes. The Research Unit will therefore look for ways of how to control the variety of updates of different software applications without side effects, and how to make computer platforms more robust to ensure proper functioning of different software subsystems.

(Spokesperson: Prof. Dr.-Ing. Rolf Ernst, Technical University of Braunschweig)

Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) is the most common type of leukemia in the Western world and characterised by an extremely heterogeneous course of disease. The trigger of CLL, which occurs at a higher age, is assumed to be the result of genetic changes that affect or switch off DNA repair mechanisms and thus also important tumour suppressor genes. The aim of the Clinical Research Unit "**Exploiting Defects in the DNA Damage Response for the Treatment of Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia**" is to examine what changes occur in the DNA repair network at the molecular level that lead to chronic lymphocytic leukemia. The researchers hope that by identifying the molecular "weak points" they will better understand the reasons for the emergence of this form of leukemia. The aim of the research work is to explore new therapies for the disease, which is immune to conventional chemotherapy.

(Spokesperson: Prof. Dr. Michael Hallek, University of Cologne)

The Research Unit **"Un/doing Differences. Practices of Human Differentiation"** will examine how cultural differences among people are created, superimposed or overruled. The study will focus on the boundaries that are drawn along languages, religions as well as ethnic or national characteristics and on the distinctions between individuals of a community. Under what conditions are distinctions made? When are differences actualised or neutralised? And what function does a division in human categories fulfil? The researchers hope to find possible answers to these questions by using a comparative research programme that thematically combines the differentiation cases examined individually in cultural sciences so far and couples empirical observation with analytical description.

(Spokesperson: Prof. Dr. Stefan Hirschauer, University of Mainz)

Topics such as rearmament, construction of the welfare state, nuclear power and the peace movement triggered ethical controversies in the "old" Federal Republic between 1949 and 1989 that decisively shaped society. The Research Unit **"Protestantism in the Ethical Debates of the Federal Republic of Germany 1949-1989"** seeks to determine how and through what institutions Protestantism influenced these ethical discussions or was influenced by them. The aim of the study is to close the research void in the border area of Protestant theology, political science, law and history. The starting point is a programmatically open definition of Protestantism to meet the diverse standpoints of churches and individuals in ethical discussions. With their interdisciplinary approach, researchers intend to reappraise the socio-political contribution of Protestantism in Germany between 1949 and 1989, which has also been influential after German reunification.

(Spokesperson: Prof. Dr. Christian Albrecht, University of Munich)

## Further Information

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More detailed information is provided by the spokespersons of the established Research Units.

For information on the DFG Research Units and Clinical Research Units also see:

- [www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/programmes/coordinated\\_programmes](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/coordinated_programmes)  
[http://www.dfg.de/http://www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/programmes/coordinated\\_programmes](http://www.dfg.de/http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/coordinated_programmes)