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ISRAELI RESEARCHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN EUROPEAN COMMISSION FLAGSHIP PROJECT

REHOVOT, ISRAEL—January 28, 2013—The European Commission has officially announced the selection of the Human Brain Project (HBP) as one of its two Future Emerging Technologies (FET) Flagship projects. The new project will federate European efforts to address one of the greatest challenges of modern science: understanding the human brain.

The goal of the Human Brain Project: Pull together all our existing knowledge about the human brain and reconstruct the brain, piece by piece, in supercomputer-based models and simulations. Such models offer the prospect of a new understanding of the human brain and the diseases that affect it, as well as advancing completely new computing and robotic technologies. The European Commission supported this vision, announcing that it has selected the HBP as one of two projects to be funded through the new FET Flagship Program, which supports highly innovative technology.

Federating more than 80 European and international research institutions, the Human Brain Project are slated to continue for ten years (2013-2023). The total cost is estimated at € 1.19 billion, to be supplied from various sources. The project will be coordinated at the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL), Switzerland, by neuroscientist Prof. Henry Markram and co-directors Profs. Karlheinz Meier of Heidelberg University, Germany, and Richard Frackowiak of Clinique Hospitaliere Universitaire Vaudoise (CHUV) and the University of Lausanne (UNIL).

Israeli scientists have been involved in the Project from its inception; their significant role is testament to the high position Israeli science holds at the forefront of international brain research. Indeed, Markram, the Project leader, is an alumnus of the Weizmann Institute's Feinberg Graduate School who completed his Ph.D. research in

the Institute's Neurobiology Department and later served on its faculty before moving to Lausanne.

Additional research groups may join as the HBP initiates an open call for further research projects. The scientific coordinators of the Israeli section of the HBP are Prof. Idan Segev of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Prof. Yadin Dudai of the Weizmann Institute of Science. Dr. Mira Marcus-Kalish of Tel-Aviv University will coordinate medical data mining.

The selection of the Human Brain Project as a FET Flagship is the result of more than three years of preparation and a rigorous, multi-stage evaluation by an independent panel chosen by the European Commission. In the coming months, the partners will negotiate a detailed agreement with the Community for the initial first two-and-a-half-year ramp-up phase ("testing" that will go until mid-2016). The project will begin working in the closing months of 2013.

Prof. Yadin Dudai's research is supported by the Irving Bieber, M.D. and Toby Bieber, M.D. Memorial Research Fund; the Nella and Leon Benozziyo Center for Neurological Diseases; the Carl and Micaela Einhorn-Dominic Brain Research Institute; the Abramson Family Foundation; the Marc Besen and the Pratt Foundation, Australia; Lisa Mierins Smith, Canada; and the Abe and Kathryn Selsky Memorial Research Project. Prof. Dudai is the incumbent of the Sara and Michael Sela Professorial Chair of Neurobiology.

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