

2009 Annual Society for Neuroscience Meeting

Since 1971, the annual Society for Neuroscience has had meetings rotating between the east, west and central parts of the US. This year's conference was visited by 30,581 participants and hosted in Chicago, October 17th – 21st.

The DFG jointly exhibited with DAAD, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and GAIN at the "Research in Germany" stand. The stand attracted approximately 300 conference participants. The employees of the various research funding organizations were also supported by researchers participating in the conference who offered their expertise. A special thanks therefore goes to Dr. Rainer Girgenrath, Dr. Rosi Lederer, Professor Jürgen Winkler and Dr. Beate Winner for their support.

Over half of the booth visitors were curious about the organization's post-doc programs. The main funding programs highlighted were DFG's "Temporary Positions for Principal Investigators" and Alexander von Humboldt's research grants, depending on if the post-docs were interested in an independent research project or a typical post-doc position. Further enquiries were usually for shorter research stays over the summer, visiting professorships or funding for international research collaboration.

During the first few days of the exhibit, booth visitors gathered general information to the various funding programs. Those conference participants who visited the booth on the final day were more likely to have specific questions like how to submit one's proposal or how proposals are processed. Other exhibitors also came by to introduce themselves and make some positive networking connections.

Both participants and fellow exhibitors repeatedly agreed that the "Research In Germany" booth showed Germany in a positive light. Although there were other German exhibitors, the "Research in Germany" label acted as the central attraction for those interested in Germany – this was notable in the number of booth visitors.

During the meeting, there was a GAIN hosted workshop titled "Neuroscience in Europe: German and EU Funding Opportunities." Representatives from the BMBF, EU and renowned researchers informed the conference participants of current developments and general funding programs. In the first part of the workshop, researchers shared positive personal reports emphasizing the advantages of transatlantic collaboration using examples from their experience(s) abroad. Further technical training was mentioned, as well as, chances to strengthen networking and personal development. The second half of the workshop focused more on EU and national funding opportunities. DFG neuroscience Review Board Members, Dr. Herta Flor and Dr. Uwe Heinemann, participated as panelists. The workshop was followed by an animated question and answer session, on things like dual careers for couples, possibilities for neurologists in clinical research or chances in innovative fields, which do not have Research Units yet. This workshop strongly increased many attendees' interest on in Germany, some of whom came to the "Research in Germany" stand to continue discussions and ask more questions.