

## Working with the Best

■ **Partnership** – Thanks to an initiative by Andreas and Thomas Strüngmann, a legally independent research institute is due to open in Frankfurt in cooperation with the Max Planck Society. The Ernst Strüngmann Institute (ESI), named after the father of the two brothers, will be dedicated to the cognitive neurosciences and will be located on the former premises of the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research as these are gradually vacated. We are breaking new ground in jointly setting up this institute: in contrast to our Max Planck Institutes, the ESI will be financed, not from public funds, but by the Strüngmann brothers, who are providing a sum of around 200 million euros. Decisions on important scientific issues concerning the ESI will be made by a Board of Trustees, which I will personally chair. The institute also fulfils the excellence criteria defined by our Society: from the choice of scientists to the evaluation of research results, our quality criteria will be applied, and the Directors at the ESI appointed Scientific Members. It is an exciting process for us to work together with a private research institute that will have maximum flexibility to explore new ways of working and offer competitive salaries to attract leading researchers from all over the world. Until the first Director is appointed, the management will temporarily be in the hands of Wolf Singer, who is currently Managing Director at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research. The research carried out at the ESI will complement that of the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research, and will attempt to facilitate the translation of scientific findings from animals to humans. We can only hope that the generous patronage of the Strüngmann brothers will set an example in Germany.

■ **Physics** – The coming new year will see the opening of the poetically named new Max Planck Institute for the Physics of Light in Erlangen, a product of the existing Research Group for Optics, Information and Photonics. The excellent scientific prospects afforded by a new field of research are what clinched the decision to set up the new institute. The move was made possible by the commitment on the part of the Free State of Bavaria to contribute 60 million euros toward investment costs. By the time the development phase is completed, the institute will have four departments with 111 established positions. The Founding Directors are

Gerd Leuchs and Philip St. John Russell, who have been studying fundamental aspects of the physics of light since 2004. With the opening of the new Institute for the Physics of Light, the Max Planck Society is complementing the work of other institutes, such as the MPI of Quantum Optics in Garching, which is expected to team up in research into photonic glass fibers. Further joint ventures are planned with the Max Planck Institute for Solid State Research in Stuttgart and the Max Planck Institute of Microstructure Physics in Halle. We hope that, in addition to our ongoing internal development, the future financial situation will enable us to continue to establish institutes that address new problems in science.



Peter Gruss,  
President of  
the Max Planck  
Society.

■ **Pact** – If we are to attract the best scientific minds to Germany in the long term, it is essential for us to offer them the same living and working conditions as are available abroad. The Five-Point Plan recently approved by the Federal Cabinet is a step in the right direction. We hope that negotiations for the Pact for Research and Innovation II will yield similarly positive results next year. With the increase in energy costs, the inflation rate and civil service pay rises, the 3-percent increase granted to us thus far will be largely eaten up before we are even able to implement the measures agreed in the Pact. To remain permanently competitive at an international level, we allied scientific organizations need an increase of 3 percent in real terms.

*Fig. 11*