

been 'promising.' But we still haven't delivered." And right now gene therapy doesn't have such a great reputation either. So, the new strategies may not be chopped liver, but they also don't appear to be magic bullets—at least not yet.

—MICHAEL HAGMANN

AUSTRIA

Researchers Brace for Political Backlash

ZÜRICH—From its position at the crossroads of Europe, the former imperial capital of Vienna has attracted scientists from across the continent, east and west, for centuries. But earlier this month, after the Austrian president approved a new government incorporating members of a far-right political party, the nation's researchers suddenly found themselves living in a state shunned by much of the international community. "My colleagues are deeply worried," says physicist Arnold Schmidt, president of the country's basic research granting agency, the Austrian Science Fund. "We need international cooperation, and we don't feel that we should be held responsible for a government that many did not support." In an open letter sent last week, Schmidt appealed to foreign researchers "to maintain or increase contacts and cooperation with scientists in Austria."

Other bodies have also been quick to reaffirm international ties and—in many cases—to distance themselves from the new government. Austria's university rectors issued a statement warning of possible "international isolation of Austria, which would be detrimental to its universities," and called on national leaders to show "openness and internationality." The University of Vienna's medical school pledged to intensify its efforts "to ensure that racism and prejudice are not tolerated." And the scientific directors of the Erwin Schrödinger Institute—a mathematical physics center in Vienna that draws visiting fellows from around the world—say on the institute's Web site that they oppose "the nationalistic and xenophobic sentiments expressed by some politicians" and reaffirm their commitment to "international scientific interaction and exchange."

So far, the actions taken by Western governments to protest the new Austrian coalition—in which six out of 12 ministers come from Jörg Haider's far-right Freedom Party

—have been mainly symbolic. The European Union (E.U.) and many of its member nations have issued statements and snubbed some representatives of the new government, but a spokesperson for the E.U.'s research commissioner, Philippe Busquin, told *Science* that sanctions are unlikely to impact research programs and that Austrian scientists will not face discrimination in their applications for E.U. grants.

But there are some signs of unease in the international community: Manfred Horvath, an engineer who heads Austria's Office of International Research and Technology Cooperation, told *Science* that the Washington-based Interagency Environmental Technology Office asked last week that a conference planned for Vienna in October be moved elsewhere. "The situation is very unpleasant for Austrian science and research, which has been increasingly integrated into the E.U.'s research activities," he says.

So far, most Austrian scientists seem more worried about the reaction from outside than about changes in national science policy or funding. The new coalition purports to back science—reaffirming the previous government's commitment to increase research spending in coming years—but it raised some concern last week when it announced that it will split management of basic and

applied research. The education ministry will now oversee basic research, while applied research will be combined with infrastructure in a ministry to be headed by Freedom Party member Michael Schmid. "I'm uneasy about splitting basic and applied research, and worried that the new government may focus less on research and more on development," says the Science Fund's Schmidt.

In the meantime, Austrian researchers are trying to reassure their colleagues around the world. Quantum teleportation pioneer Anton Zeilinger of the University of Vienna is urging international colleagues to continue their normal exchange with Austrian counterparts. And Erwin Heberle-Bors of Vienna's Institute of Microbiology and Genetics wants fellow Austrian researchers to "leave their ivory towers and discuss and explain the situation" to scientists abroad, and to continue their "full engagement with the international research community."

—ROBERT KOENIG

SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

Controversy Claims CDC Lab Chief

A senior manager at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been reassigned as agency officials scramble to quell a widening controversy about the reallocation of funds that Congress had earmarked for specific diseases. Testifying last week before Congress, CDC chief Jeffrey Koplan announced that virologist Brian Mahy has been replaced temporarily by James LeDuc as head of the division of viral and rickettsial diseases.

Mahy came under fire last year when an investigation by the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services found that his division had spent between \$8.8 million and \$12.9 million that Congress had approved for research into chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) on a variety of other diseases. The report angered lawmakers and CFS patient groups. In response, Koplan offered his apologies and promised to restore the CFS funds, but he didn't take action against Mahy (*Science*, 7 January, p. 22).

Earlier this month, however, Mahy's position was weakened further when a *Washington Post* report alleged that his division had also reallocated money earmarked for hantavirus programs. Testifying before the House appropriations subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, Koplan said a preliminary inquiry has confirmed the allegation. CDC has hired private accountants to review the hantavirus program, Koplan said, followed by an investigation of all programs within the National Center for Infectious Diseases. In addition, Koplan has asked CDC managers to report within 90 days on any other cases where the agency provided inaccurate information to Congress.

Koplan stressed that the diverted money had not been wasted but used "to combat other life-threatening infectious diseases," such as Ebola and Nipah virus. He blamed the diversions on CDC's culture, "which emphasizes getting things done and taking care of the administrative niceties afterward." A CDC spokesperson said Mahy will stay at CDC but couldn't say in which position.

"It's a welcome piece of news," says Kimberly Kenney, executive director of the Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome Association of America, a group that helped expose the diversion of CFS money. But scientists express sympathy for Mahy, who they believe was trying to deal as best he could with emerging epidemics. "It's kind of sad," says Charles Calisher, a virologist at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. "A guy does what he thinks is the right thing, and he gets lambasted."

—MARTIN ENSERINK

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—Arnold Schmidt