



**IBEXPERTS is the Project Manager of the 1.4 Million Euro EU FP6  
« EUROFLU » Project (SP5B-CT-2007-044098)  
January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 - December 31<sup>st</sup> 2009**

« EUROFLU » project (SP5B-CT-2007-044098) is a three year long project (January 1st 2007 - December 31st 2009) financed by the EU with 11 partners from 4 EU Member States (Germany, Greece, Slovakia and Spain) and one from an Associated Member State (Israel).

Influenza represents a worldwide threat to human and animal health. Highly Pathogenic Influenza Viruses have not only infected birds but also more than 250 people, and in both species mortality rate was high. Up to now, there is no vaccine against the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Virus (HPAIV) and variants resistant to current antiviral drugs are emerging. This highlights the urgent need for a vaccine and new antiviral drugs. This is the reason why the European Commission has equally financed new projects focusing on animal and on human health for a total amount of 28.3 million Euros.

This research project focuses on **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Viruses (HPAIV)** and has three objectives:

- to identify, characterize and validate HPAIV-factors that are involved in the recognition and targeting of the virus to the cellular host receptor. Since the host receptor differs between human and avian, it determines the virus host specificity.
- to reveal viral and cellular factors and mechanisms that regulate virus replication within the infected cell and can therefore determine cell tropism (the way the virus enters only certain kinds of cells and not others) and host specificity. Focus will be on virus/host-interactions including viral factors from different HPAIV (H5 and H7, and H5/H7-reassortants).
- the use of mouse and chicken models for *in vivo* analysis of HPAIV infections of mammals and birds to monitor HPAIV-transmission and pathogenicity within organisms.

The « EUROFLU » project is managed by **Dr. Rachel Kreisberg-Zakarin**, general manager of IBEXPERTS Ltd. ("IBEX") and is coordinated by Prof. Stephan Pleschka from JLU, Germany. Besides its role in the project management, IBEX is also research partner whose task is to develop a database of the experimental and computational results. Within the R&D activity, Dr. Kreisberg-Zakarin is the Leader of a Work Package addressing the interaction between the viral surface protein Hemagglutinin (HA) and the host cellular glycoproteins.

Raanana, Israel 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2007