

The origins of the molecular biology discipline stem from the early 1960's when scientists first began to study biological entities at a molecular level. The EMBC was founded by EMBO as a way of funding and structuring the field in Europe.

In 1964, the European Molecular Biology Organization was incorporated as a non-profit organization under Swiss law and approximately 200 leading scientists from within the emerging molecular biology field were selected as the first members. EMBO thus established itself as an academy and took its first steps towards becoming a unique organization. As the role of EMBO and the range of its activities was defined, the organization began to seek the financial support to execute its plans.

The newly established Volkswagen Foundation generously supported the early EMBO networking activities. The EMBO Council then sought more long-term support from the European states with the guiding principle

"...that projects and persons be chosen regardless of nationality and that all its (EMBO) activities be guided by scientific excellence, coupled with usefulness to European molecular biology."

This guiding principle, early EMBO achievements and the quality of people associated with EMBO, led 14 governments to participate in an inter-governmental action in 1970 to ensure support of EMBO. These governments were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Legally, this governmental support had to be different from that which bound EMBO. As a result, the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC) was established as the legal entity to 1) provide a secure source of funds for a generic programme that included initially the EMBO fellowships, courses, workshops and administration and 2) provide a framework to establish the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL).

Today, the EMBC supports those EMBO activities that fall within the area of its General Programme. EMBO, in turn, acts through its members as a guarantor of the quality of the programmes and as a source of new initiatives appropriate for the evolving field of molecular biology. These initiatives may be separate from the General Programme.

Since 1969 the number of Member States of the EMBC has continued to grow. The core group of 14 members is supplemented today by Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. In recent years, new members have come increasingly from Eastern Europe. In this way, the EMBC is contributing to the integration of these countries into European science.



[The Foundation of the European Molecular Biology Conference \(EMBC\), 1963 – 1969 \(pdf\)](#)

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The EMBC Agreement

[The full text of the agreement \(pdf\)](#)

- 12 February 1969: 12 governments signed the Agreement
- 1970: formal ratification of EMBC

[Accord instituant la Conference européenne de biologie moleculaire \(pdf\)](#) (French)

[Agreement establishing the European Molecular Biology Conference \(pdf\)](#) (English)

[Übereinkommen zur Gründung einer Europäischen Konferenz für Molekularbiologie \(pdf\)](#)
(German)

EMBC Timeline (ratification)

2018	Montenegro
2016	Malta
Lithuania	
2007	Belgium*
Luxembourg	
Slovakia	
2006	Estonia
1999	Poland
1998	Croatia
1997	Slovenia
1994	Czech Republic
Portugal	
1993	Turkey
1992	Hungary
1978	Iceland
1977	Finland
1974	Ireland
1972	Greece
Italy	
1970	Austria
Denmark	
France	
Israel	

Norway

Spain

Netherlands

United Kingdom

1969

Sweden

Switzerland

Germany

*Observer status since 1970