**Past., Present and Future Perspective**

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**RITA LEVI-MONTALCINI INSTITUTE**

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Rita Levi-Montalcini is still considered as the first lady in Neuroscience in the world. She dedicated her entire life to research and this culminated in the discovery of NGF in 1951 for which she was awarded the Nobel prize for Medicine in 1986.

I had the honour to collaborate with her on a daily basis during the last 10 years of her life.

While I was a member of the European Parliament, together with Philippe Busquin, the Commissioner for Research in Europe we invited her to lead the European Conference in Neuroscience in 2003. After this the Commission almost doubled the budget for the VII Framework Programme of Research. On this occasion I remember that she told me that her dream was to develop in Italy an Institute of brain research where her young researchers could work together in a stimulating international environment. After long discussions we decided to locate the new Institute, which was called European Brain Research Institute (EBRI), at the Santa Lucia Foundation in Via del Fosso di Fiorano, where a critical mass of young researchers from Santa Lucia Foundation, Italian Council for Research and EBRI could work together and synergise. The Institute was officially opened in 2005 and in the initial period of three years was actively productive. However after a period of idyllic relations a legal controversy with the property owners arose. In order to avoid EBRI laboratories’ eviction from the premises, Rita Levi-Montalcini herself had to defend her creature in court.

In 2010 she decided to appoint me as Commissioner of EBRI and I accepted the challenge to work with her and with the Leaders of EBRI laboratories to relaunch EBRI in order to allow young researchers to continue their work in Italy.

Since then, the Institute has grown progressively and now approximately 60 researchers work in a programme which aims to explore molecular, electrophysiological and therapeutic aspects of Alzheimer’s disease and other CNS disorders.

Scientific activity is now flourishing and this year we are celebrating the EBRI Decennial. The scientific activity is made possible thanks to the financial support in part from the Government (Agreement with Italian CNR and Financial Law) and from funds deriving from EU projects and grants from other institutions in the USA, or from national and international private Institutions.

New perspectives are now opening for EBRI’s future since we are engaged in the rebuilding at University of Roma Sapienza EBRI’s new location which will be denominated “Rita Levi-Montalcini Institute”.

Finally Rita’s dream is coming true.