

## The CaixaResearch Institute will be Spain's first research centre specialising in immunology

- "la Caixa" Foundation presents the scientific project for its future research centre, which will be devoted to the study of processes of the immune system in its interaction with the most prevalent conditions, such as neurological, oncological and infectious diseases, and to the analysis of influential environmental factors.
- The CaixaResearch Institute will conduct its own high impact research, in which the priorities will be transversality and interdisciplinarity, the development of cutting-edge technologies, and the transfer of results to society.
- The new centre will also establish a stable ecosystem of collaboration among the four leading centres with which "la Caixa" Foundation has close ties: the IrsiCaixa AIDS Research Institute, Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal), Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO) and the Barcelonaβeta Brain Research Center (BBRC).
- Work on the site of the future CaixaResearch Institute, opposite CosmoCaixa in Barcelona, will begin in June this year. The new centre will occupy a total useable area of approximately 19,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Barcelona, 8 June 2022.** "la Caixa" Foundation today presented the scientific project for the new CaixaResearch Institute at an event attended by **Isidro Fainé**, president of the "la Caixa" Foundation, and including addresses by **Javier Solana**, chair of the Foundation's scientific committee, and **Josep Taberner**, director of the CaixaResearch Institute scientific project.

The CaixaResearch Institute, located in Barcelona, will be the first in Spain and one of the first in Europe dedicated to immunology. The future centre will take a transversal approach, linking the different scientific and technological disciplines involved in the study of the immune system. It will also focus particularly on

---

"la Caixa" Foundation Press Department

Andrea Pelayo: [apelayo@fundacionlacaixa.org](mailto:apelayo@fundacionlacaixa.org) / 618 126 685

Press Room: <https://prensa.fundacionlacaixa.org/es/>

 @FundlaCaixa #CaixaResearch #CaixaResearchInstitute

innovation and the transfer of results to society. At the new facility, research will be key to advancing in our knowledge and understanding of immune system processes and their role in global health and infectious, oncological and neurological diseases.

The immune system is not only our first line of defence against classical pathogens such as viruses or bacteria, but is also a system for identifying other harmful agents from inside and outside our body. T- and B-cell receptors (what we might call the guardian angels of the immune system) form a living memory of all viruses, bacteria and other molecules that come into contact with our body and generate an internal reaction that activates defence mechanisms. This precise recognition system enables the differentiation of our own cells from all others, making it a candidate for the development of targeted treatments to combat malfunctioning cells such as cancerous cells, as well as viruses, bacteria and so on.

"In establishing this centre, our aim is to position Spanish science on a level with the major international institutions in immunology, a field that offers countless opportunities to improve our efficacy in the prevention of certain diseases, as well as to achieve better diagnosis and generate more therapeutic options", said Javier Solana, president of the "la Caixa" Foundation scientific committee.

The event also included a round table whose participants were: **Josep Tabernero**, director of Vall d'Hebron Institute of Oncology (VHIO); **Bonaventura Clotet**, director of the IrsiCaixa AIDS Research Institute; **Antoni Plasencia**, director of Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal); **Denise Nanche**, scientific director at ISGlobal; and **Arcadi Navarro**, director of the Barcelonaβeta Brain Research Center (BBRC). From the very start, the CaixaResearch Institute will conduct complementary and collaborative research with these centres, generating a powerful ecosystem.

According to Josep Tabernero, the new institute will be "a catalyst that will bring about a turning point in scientific production and strengthen pre-existing cooperative efforts. It will promote new synergies among scientific communities and place the enormous potential of the scientific and technical resources of the CaixaResearch Institute at the service of all four centres".

### **A sustainable building with advanced infrastructure**

---

**"la Caixa" Foundation Press Department**

Andrea Pelayo: [apelayo@fundacionlacaixa.org](mailto:apelayo@fundacionlacaixa.org) / 618 126 685

Press Room: <https://prensa.fundacionlacaixa.org/es/>

 @FundlaCaixa #CaixaResearch #CaixaResearchInstitute

Following the approval of town planning procedures by Barcelona City Council and the Government of Catalonia, "la Caixa" Foundation continues to work to bring this ambitious project to fruition. Drafting the scientific plan and establishing the infrastructure required are among the main tasks over these first few months of work.

The building, which will have usable floor area of approximately 19,000 m<sup>2</sup>, will be equipped with state-of-the-art spaces and facilities for scientific activities, including dry and wet labs, scientific-technical services and spaces for innovation. The new centre will also contain office areas for direction, management and administrative tasks, and spaces to receive and welcome visitors where events, training and networking initiatives will also take place.

Work on the future centre will begin in June this year with the gradual demolition of the existing building on Carrer Manuel Ramon, opposite CosmoCaixa.

The Foundation plans to begin construction in accordance with the architectural project drafted by TAC Arquitectes in the second half of 2022. The process of attracting and recruiting talent will begin in 2023, while the first spaces in the architectural complex will open in 2024. Finally, the construction and adaptation of the scientific spaces will be completed in 2025.

### **Major commitment to research**

In 2021, "la Caixa" Foundation – whose chairman is Isidro Fainé – devoted over 36 million euros to research and innovation projects in biomedicine and health at research centres, universities and hospitals in Spain and Portugal. The organisation cooperates with more than a hundred institutions in those two countries, providing either structural support or grants for research projects. This major commitment has established "la Caixa" Foundation as one of the leading organisations of its kind in this field in Europe.

Last year alone, researchers supported by CaixaResearch – "la Caixa" Foundation's research and health arm – produced nearly 1,100 indexed scientific publications. Moreover, 12 new biomedical companies were set up and 21 patents were registered in the area of knowledge transfer to business.

---

#### **"la Caixa" Foundation Press Department**

Andrea Pelayo: [apelayo@fundacionlacaixa.org](mailto:apelayo@fundacionlacaixa.org) / 618 126 685

Press Room: <https://prensa.fundacionlacaixa.org/es/>

 @FundlaCaixa #CaixaResearch #CaixaResearchInstitute