

 FULL TITLE	European Retinal Research Training Network
ACRONYM	RETNET
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SUMMARY	<p>The visual sense is the most precious of all human senses – its loss is considered as one of the most severe and dreadful handicaps for human life quality. Degenerative diseases of the retina (retinopathies) represent the most prevalent cause of registered blindness in the European society and will get even more prevalent in our ageing population. At the same time one is impressed by the ingenious capabilities and properties of the retina that has evolved to serve its unique function in light perception and first-order neuronal processing. The focus of the proposed “European Retinal Research Training Network” (‘RETNET’) will be to promote and improve training possibilities in the field of visual neuroscience, molecular biology of the retina and ophthlmo-genetics and to improve our knowledge of retinal diseases that will eventually lead to prevention and therapy. The retina has long been recognized as an ‘approachable part of the brain’. Without doubt, the understanding of the function of the retina, its cellular components and molecular principles as well as the mechanisms of retinal degeneration will strengthen our understanding of the mechanisms of neuronal processing and neurodegeneration as a whole. Nine internationally recognised research groups from seven countries link up in the context of a well defined collaborative ‘RETNET’ project in order to formulate and implement a structured training programme for young researchers in the field of retinal research. Worldwide, there are only a handful of centres with a comparable expertise in the molecular analysis of retinal genetics, biology and development. Over the past years, the ‘RETNET’ consortium has been responsible for the mapping and identification of over 30 retinal dystrophy loci/genes. This unique ‘RETNET’ framework will boost the professional career development of early stage researchers as well as experienced researchers effectively, as the proposing research teams bring together a critical mass of theoretical and applied research strategies by using a multidisciplinary/intersectorial approach.</p>
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PROJECT WEB-SITE	<a href="http://www.euro-ret.net">http://www.euro-ret.net</a>