

Communiqué

In March 2004 the CNRS was informed that Anders Pape Moller, a CNRS senior scientist, was under investigation by the Danish Committee for Scientific Dishonesty (DCSD), and that the Committee concluded that "On this basis, it is therefore DCSD's opinion that Anders Pape Moller has shown scientific dishonesty". This opinion was based on a report by an ad hoc committee (as it was called by the DCSD) which found that an article signed by Anders Pape Moller had included data that was in part fabricated and that the article's scientific essence was therefore falsified. The article, meanwhile, had been withdrawn by Anders Pape Moller.

The General Director of the CNRS decided to appoint an independent "committee of wise men" to examine the Anders Pape Moller case, and asked the committee to provide him with a well-argued opinion on the finding of the DCSD. Chaired by a scientific figure not attached to the CNRS, the committee worked independently and outside of the CNRS. Its work consisted in an examination of the documents of the case from a scientific, legal, and human point of view. In addition it heard individuals connected to the case as well as Anders Pape Moller himself. The committee's report and all of the documents studied were submitted to the General Director of the CNRS.

The committee of wise men found that good laboratory practices had not been observed either in the conservation of biological material or in the traceability and storage of data. After a very fine, detailed examination of the facts and a meticulous search for evidence, the committee has found that it is not possible to establish formal proof of intent to commit scientific fraud on the part of Anders Pape Moller concerning the research published in the article, which was withdrawn from the journal *Oikos*. Lacking the material evidence necessary to establish innocence, the committee was equally unable to reach this conclusion. In such a situation, by French legal principle, it is the presumption of innocence that must be applied.

In accordance with the extremely thorough analysis carried out by the committee, the executive office of the CNRS concludes that there is not sufficient proof to charge Anders Pape Moller with scientific fraud. As a result, there will be no charges brought against him. The executive office of the CNRS has nevertheless reminded Anders Pape Moller that good laboratory practices are indispensable and has requested that he pursue a program of training in best-quality laboratory procedure. In conjunction with its Committee on Ethics, the CNRS has furthermore ordered a process of broad reflection on questions of good laboratory practices and the need to take laboratory practice into account in the evaluation of research teams and of individual researchers.