

**Press release****Leibniz-Institut für Alternsforschung - Fritz-Lipmann-Institut e.V. (FLI)****Sylvia Kreysel-Minar**

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**New ambassador for the excellent research on aging in Jena****Prof. Dario Riccardo Valenzano takes over as Scientific Director of the FLI**

Jena. The new year starts with major changes at the Leibniz Institute on Aging - Fritz Lipmann Institute Jena. Prof. Dr. Dario Riccardo Valenzano takes over as Scientific Director on January 1, 2024. The 46-year-old has been a member of the ranks of renowned FLI-researchers since July 2021; he conducts cross-team research into the evolutionary and ecological causes responsible for the enormous diversity of ageing rates and life spans of living beings in nature. He will now transfer his passion for research to his work as a board member. "It's as a great opportunity to do both. As a Director I can represent the interests of science, use my experience to advise committees and politicians and at the same time advance excellent research at the FLI, not only in my field but as a whole," says Prof. Valenzano, describing his motivation and expressing optimism. "Leading both, my research team as well as the FLI, will be a new exciting challenge, where I see the opportunity to impact our scientific endeavour more effectively. But with support of my colleagues and our staff, our shoulders are well covered."

Doing this, he will be supported by his scientific team, his organizational staff and from administrative side. Dr. Daniele Barthel, Administrative Director of the FLI, has been closely involved in the preparations for the change and is very much looking forward to the collaboration. "The institute enjoys an excellent outstanding international reputation for its excellent research work. In Prof. Valenzano, we have gained a world-renowned expert in ageing research and a great networker for the position of Scientific Director. This sets the course for the future successful development of the institute."

"With Professor Valenzano, the FLI has gained an internationally recognized expert in the field of evolutionary biology as its new scientific director. Thanks to his research focus on the 'microbiome and ageing' in conjunction with research on killifish, the FLI has the opportunity to establish a unique selling point and expand its international visibility in this field. This goes hand in hand with the opportunity to become even more visible on the map of German ageing research in the future," says Thuringia's Minister of Science Wolfgang Tiefensee and adds: "I would like to thank Professor Nordheim for the excellent work he has done and the professional way in which he has driven the institute forward in recent years."

The outgoing Scientific Director, Prof. Dr. Alfred Nordheim, will also continue to support the Institute and his successor in an advisory capacity. "I will be happy to advise, if requested," he says. Nevertheless, it is not easy for Prof. Nordheim to say goodbye. The 72-year-old was Scientific Director of the FLI for almost six years and knows the institute, its high potentials and the challenges it faces. "When I took up my post, I was impressed by the enormous commitment with which research is carried out here at the FLI and in the Jena environment. Dario Riccardo Valenzano can accelerate this in his new role." And what will Prof. Nordheim do with his newly acquired time? "I've spent a lot of time at my desk, traveling by train and car, and in meetings over the last few years. Now I finally want to do some exercise again and hopefully regain some fitness. And I want to write the biography of a friend, who passed away long ago," he reveals his plans.

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Anna Schroll  
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