

# Dr. Cayetano González appointed IRB Barcelona Emeritus Professor

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**Dr. Cayetano González joined IRB Barcelona in 2004 as one of the Institute's founding Group Leaders.**

- An internationally recognized expert in *Drosophila melanogaster*, he has advanced the understanding of cell division, stem cells, and cancer.
- Stepping down as Head of the Cell Division lab, he will remain an active and valued member of the Institute, contributing his extensive experience and scientific perspective.

Recently, Dr. Cayetano González stepped down from his position as head of the Cell Division Laboratory at IRB Barcelona. Over more than 40 years, his research efforts were channelled into uncovering the fundamental principles governing cell proliferation and malignant growth.

Dr. González obtained his PhD at the Centro de Biología Molecular Severo Ochoa in 1986, after which he spent four years as a postdoctoral researcher at the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London. In 1990, he was appointed Joint Principal Investigator of the Cancer Research Campaign at the Medical Sciences Institute of the University of Dundee. He was then appointed Group Leader at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg in 1994, during a particularly vibrant and flourishing period.

With internationally recognized expertise in *Drosophila melanogaster*, Dr. González was among the first researchers to pioneer the resurgence of this powerful *in vivo* system for studying the genetic and cellular basis of cancer. Leveraging the advantages of this model, his work uncovered key mechanisms of centrosome function, mitotic spindle organization, and asymmetric cell division in neural stem cells. Importantly, he demonstrated how defects in these processes can lead to tumour formation.

"I am deeply indebted to IRB Barcelona for its constant and very generous support over the years, which has been vital to our research. A special thanks goes to my lab members, whose exceptional dedication so often went well beyond the call of duty and contributed fundamentally to our achievements," he says.

The González Laboratory also pioneered the discovery of cancer/testis (CT) genes that actively drive malignancy in somatic tissues, as well as the identification of key proteins involved in sex-linked differences in cancer. More recently, his research expanded into the development of innovative *Drosophila* and yeast models to investigate molecular pathways controlled by oncogenes in pediatric cancers, such as Ewing sarcoma.

Furthermore, he played a central role in establishing the IRB Barcelona PhD Programme, which has since become a recognized training pathway for early-career scientists, equipping them with strong interdisciplinary foundations and research skills.

"Over the years, our PhD programme has truly evolved into a flagship initiative for IRB Barcelona, setting a benchmark for academic excellence. It stands as a proud symbol of our commitment to

nurturing impactful, world-class scholarship and shaping the next generation of research scientists,” affirms Dr. González.

Over his career, Dr. González authored highly influential scientific publications and trained a cohort of PhD students and postdocs, many of whom now hold research positions in institutions worldwide. He is also an elected member of EMBO and, in 2026, he was appointed ICREA Emeritus Professor.

While he steps back from his laboratory leadership role, he will remain at IRB Barcelona as Emeritus Professor, continuing to contribute intellectually and to inspire the scientific community.

“It is an honour to have been appointed Emeritus Professor at IRB Barcelona, the institution that has long been a cornerstone of my scientific journey. This role offers a wonderful opportunity to maintain close ties with our vibrant research community and stay engaged with the groundbreaking science happening here. I look forward to supporting the institute’s mission and to contributing to its continued success,” he states

We invite you to find out more about his research at IRB Barcelona in this "Meet our scientists" video.

## **About IRB Barcelona**

The Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB Barcelona) pursues a society free of disease. To this end, it conducts multidisciplinary research of excellence to cure cancer and other diseases linked to ageing. It establishes technology transfer agreements with the pharmaceutical industry and major hospitals to bring research results closer to society, and organises a range of science outreach activities to engage the public in an open dialogue. IRB Barcelona is an international centre that hosts 400 researchers and more than 30 nationalities. Recognised as a Severo Ochoa Centre of Excellence since 2011, IRB Barcelona is a CERCA centre and member of the Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology (BIST).

<https://www.irbbarcelona.org/en/news/institutional/dr-cayetano-gonzalez-appointed-irb-barcelona-emeritus-professor>