

Preliminary Program

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# Joint ForTra-BIH Workshop on Gene and Cell Therapy (GCT)

Where do we stand and where do we (want to) go?



May 18 and 19, 2026



Goethe University Frankfurt/Main  
Campus Westend, Casino-Gebäude  
Theodor-W.-Adorno-Platz 1  
60323 Frankfurt am Main  
Germany

## Day 1 (May 18, 2026)

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12.00–13.00	Registration & Get-together & Lunch
13.00–13.20	<b>Dr. Tanja Rosenmund</b> (SPARK-BIH and National Strategy for Gene- and Cell-based Therapies), <b>Prof. Dr. Martin Zörnig</b> (Managing Director, ForTra gGmbH): Welcome
13.20–14.00	Keynote lecture 1: <b>Prof. Juan Carlos Izpisua Belmonte</b> (San Diego Institute of Science, Altos Labs, USA): Reprogramming Aging: Toward a Biology of Health and Longevity"
14.00 - 14.30	<b>Dr. Christoph Conrad</b> (Regulatory Support Unit, BIH, Berlin, Germany): Regulation as a Compass – Lessons from Navigating the Complexity of Academic Translation
14.30–15.00	<b>Dr. Jessica Lukassen</b> and <b>Dr. Jana Rabe</b> (HERTIN & Partner Rechts- und Patentanwälte, Berlin, Germany): Insights into legal strategies for protecting inventions in the field of gene and cell therapy
15.00–15.45	Coffee break & Networking
15.45–16.45	GMP Production Panel: Manufacturing gaps, hospital exemption, <i>in vivo</i> delivery perspectives (Chair: <b>Prof. Dr. Ulrike Köhl</b> , University of Leipzig, Germany) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Dr. Melissa van Pel</b> (NecstGen, Leiden, The Netherlands)</li><li>▪ <b>Dr. Núria Gavaldà</b> (Blood and Tissue Bank, Barcelona, Spain)</li><li>▪ <b>Dr. Knut Steffensen</b> (Karolinska ATMP Center, Stockholm, Sweden)</li><li>▪ <b>Prof. Dr. Uwe Bücheler</b> (Rentschler Biopharma SE, Laupheim, Germany)</li></ul>

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16.45–17.45	Presentations of 3 ForTra-funded projects: <b>Prof. Dr. Axel Schambach</b> (Hannover Medical School, Germany): Lentiviral vector-mediated gene therapy to treat hearing and balance loss in Usher 1B syndrome patients <b>Prof. Dr. Michael Sieweke</b> (TU Dresden, Germany): Development of proliferative human macrophages for cancer therapy <b>Dr. med. Momsen Reincke</b> (Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany): NMDAR-CAAR T cells to treat NMDAR encephalitis
17.45–18.15	Coffee break & Networking
18.15–19.00	Keynote lecture 2: <b>Prof. Dr. Carl June</b> (Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, USA): Precision Engineering in Allogeneic Design: Driving CAR-T Evolution Toward Off-the-Shelf Solutions for Solid Tumors
19.00–21.00	Dinner & Networking

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## Day 2 (May 19, 2026)

9.00–10.30

VC Panel

(Chair: **PD Dr. Axel Polack**, General Partner Joint Polish Investment Fund)

- **Dr. Thomas Voit** (UCL, Institute of Child Health, London, UK)
- **Dr. Annegret de Baey** (Seventure Partners SA, Paris, France)
- **Dr. Fei Tian** (MIG Capital, Munich, Germany)
- **Dr. Catriona Crombie** (Catriona Crombie Consulting, Cambridge, UK)
- **Dr. Therese Liechtenstein** (4BIO Capital, London, UK)
- **Dr. med. Peter Neubeck** (Kurma Partners, Paris, France)

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10.30–11.00

Coffee break & Networking

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11.00–12.15

**Short presentations of teams funded by the National Strategy of Gene- and Cell-based Therapies:**

**Dr. Kathrin Kusch** (Medical University Göttingen, Germany): Hearing the Light

**Prof. Dr. Evelyn Ullrich** (Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany) and **Prof. Dr. Toni Cathomen** (University Hospital Freiburg, Germany): Engineered NK cells entering the stage: translation of AML-targeted CAR-NK cells towards clinical application

**Prof. Dr. Hildegard Büning** (Hannover Medical School, Germany) and **Prof. Dr. Michael Hudecek** (University Hospital Würzburg, Germany): In Vivo Generation of Chimeric Antigen Receptor T cells with T cell retargeted Adeno-Associated Virus Vectors

**Prof. Dr. Wolfram Zimmermann** (Medical University Göttingen, Germany): Genome editing in patients with DMD – from bench to bedside

**Dr. Anna Resch** (University Hospital Freiburg, Germany): Next generation corneal repair: a bioengineered solution and its regulatory roadmap

**PD Dr. Dr. Roland Schelker** (University Hospital Regensburg, Germany): ESOSTEM155: miRNA-boosted TCR-T therapy for sarcoma

**Dr. Philippe Vollmer Barbosa** (Hannover Medical School, Germany): iGUARD - bring back life into breathing

**PD Dr. Jennifer Altomonte** (Technical University of Munich, Germany): Fighting cancer through fusion

**Prof. Dr. Amar Deep Sharma** (Hannover Medical School, Germany): RNA-HEALER: RNA Therapeutics for Liver Fibrosis

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12.15–12.30

Poster intro pitches

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12.30–14.00

Lunch & Networking & Poster presentation

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**14.00–14.45** Keynote lecture 3: **Prof. Dr. Alessandro Aiuti** (San Raffaele-Telethon Institut für Gentherapie (SR-Tiget) and Università VitaSalute San Raffaele, Milano, Italy): The Journey of Gene Therapy for Rare Diseases: From Research to Medicines

**14.45–15.30** European Perspective Panel  
(Chair: **Prof. Dr. med. Annette Künkele-Langer**, (Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany)

- **Dr. Thomas Voit** (UCL, Institute of Child Health, London, UK)
- **Dr. Jim Lund** (CCRM Nordic, Gothenburg, Sweden)
- **Dr. Manel Juan** (Hospital Clinic Barcelona, Spain)
- **Prof. Dr. Hildegard Büning** (Hannover Medical School, Germany)
- **Dr. Christian Gallus** (BIH and National Strategy for Gene- and Cell-Based Therapies, Berlin, Germany)

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**15.30–15.45** Coffee break & Networking

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**15.45–16.45** Business Presentations

**Dr. Felix Lorenz** (Captain T Cell GmbH, Berlin, Germany): Boosting efficacy of TCR- and CAR-T cells using a novel TGF $\beta$  switch receptor to counteract the hostile tumor microenvironment

**Dr. Sonja Steppan** (Fresenius Group, Bad Homburg, Germany): EASYGEN – A European Consortium enabling Decentralized Hospital-Based CAR-T Manufacturing at the Point of Care

**Prof. Halvard Böning** (Institute for Transfusion Medicine and Immunohematology, Goethe University, at German Red Cross Blood Service Baden-Württemberg-Hessen, Institute Frankfurt): The journey of an academic cell therapy medicine towards commercialization: The Obnitix story

**Dr. Liane Preußner** (Immatics Biotechnologies GmbH, Tübingen, Germany): Delivering the Power of PRAME-directed T cells to Cancer Patients

**16.45**

Prize Winners, wrap up: where do we need to go with GCT, Farewell



**FORTRA**

**BIH** Berlin Institute  
of Health  
at Charité

**SPARK**  
BIH