Prof Ralf R. Tönjes, Ph.D.

Ralf Reinhard Tönjes (RRT; German) is life scientist and regulator of medicinal products at Paul-Ehrlich-Institut (PEI), Federal Institute for Vaccines and Biomedicines, Division of Haematology, Cell and Gene Therapy, Langen, Germany.

RRT received his M.S. degree in Biology and Germanistics (1983) and his Ph.D. degree in Biology (1986) from Philipps University, Marburg, Germany. His thesis involved molecular cloning and analyses of histone genes and proteins for chromatin studies. As a researcher, he worked at Fraunhofer Institute, Hannover, Germany, and at Rockefeller University, New York, United States (1986-1991). His research interests included the liver specific regulation of genes in mutant as well as genetically modified mice.

At PEI, RRT was head of three sections since 1991. At current, in the restructured organisation at PEI, he became head of subsection “Tissue Preparations, Xenotransplantation”. As such, RRT is in charge of evaluations of medicinal products including human tissue preparations and xenogeneic cell therapeutics according to European and German legislations. Simultaneously, RRT’s area of experimental research is the safety of xenotransplantation. In particular, he concentrates on the characterization of porcine microbes including viruses and zoonotic agents as well as endogenous retroviruses and retroelements. In addition, RRT is involved in the non-clinical testing of xenotransplants using genetically modified animals.

In 1998, RRT founded the German working group for xenotransplantation (DAX) together with   
Dr. Joachim Denner.

Since 2002, RRT teaches as an adjunct professor and lecturer for biochemistry at Goethe University, Frankfurt/Main, Germany.

Since 2005, RRT is representative of Germany at World Health Organization (WHO) and at European Medicinal Agency (EMA) for global consultations on regulatory requirements for clinical trials of xenotransplantation. Since 2008, RRT is German representative for Tissues & Cells (T&C) at the European Commission, National Competent Authorities, Substances of Human Origin (SoHO). Since 2012, RRT is German representative for T&C at the European Committee on Organ Transplantation (CD-P-TO), EDQM, Council of Europe. Since 2022, RRT is German Member of SoHO Network, SoHO National Focal Point for Blood, Human Organs, MAR and/or Tissues and Cells. Since 2023, RRT is expert for T&C and Member of SoHO Network Coordination Committee (NCC) within the SoHO National Focal Points.