Understanding VIOLENCE. Recent advances in biology, sociology, and modeling. The EPFL-LATSIS Symposium 2009, 11-13th February 2009, will deal with one of the most important social and public health problems worldwide: violence. (more…)

It will take place at the EPFL on February 11-13th 2009. Despite great interest in understanding the major causes of violence and in developing effective prevention and intervention programs, knowledge generated by experts on different fields is nowadays fragmented and generally circumscribed to the circles where it is generated. Violent behavior is related to complex environmental and social circumstances, but heritable and other biological factors are also implicated. An integrated view of the causes of violence should take into account sociological and psychological aspects, together with biological, evolutionary and modeling approaches.

The goal of the next EPFL-Latsis Symposium is to bring together world leaders from each of these fields to discuss major recent advances in

- biological (genetic risk factors; stress; hormonal alterations; neuroimaging data on brain function alterations),
- psycho-sociological (hierarchical relationships and population health; elements of the micro-context; developmental trajectories) and
- modeling approaches (virtual reality and emotions; computational models on the development of hierarchical societies)

to foster actual interactions between these fields. In total, there will be 6 sessions organized around key questions related to “understanding VIOLENCE”, in which presentations by invited speakers will be followed by a large discussion animated by a leading expert. There will be poster sessions and a round table that will include representatives from major international organizations with programs on violence and representatives from institutions that directly deal with violent individuals or with their victims. The language and level in speakers’ presentations will be accessible to non-experts, as part of the common goal and effort for establishing a true communication among the different backgrounds and approaches.

The meeting is organized by Carmen Sandi (Brain Mind Institute, EPFL). Everyone interested is invited to join by registering at http://latsis2009.epfl.ch. Presentations and discussion will be in English.