

**Giacomo Rizzolatti** is Professor of Human Physiology at the Università degli studi di Parma, where he is the Director of the Department of Neurosciences.

Formerly President of the European Brain Behavior Society and the Italian Society for Neuroscience, as well as member of the European Medical Research Council, Professor Rizzolatti has, for several years, directed the European Training Program in Brain and Behaviour Research (ETP) sponsored by the European Science Foundation. He is member of *Accademia Europaea* and of *Accademia dei Lincei* as well as Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was recently elected *Associé étranger* of the *Institut de France's Académie des Sciences*.

Among Professor Rizzolatti's major awards are the Golgi Prize for Physiology, the George Miller Award of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society, the *Accademia dei Lincei's* Feltrinelli Prize for Medicine and the Herlitzka Prize for Physiology awarded by the *Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*.

Since the early eighties, Professor Rizzolatti has been recording the activity of nerve cells in the brain specialised for the control of hand actions such as grabbing objects or picking items up. In 1996, this resulted in the discovery of "Mirror Neurons" that is neurons which fire or become active both when one performs such hand actions as well as when one observes them in another. Some scientists consider "Mirror Neurons" as one of the most important findings in the last decade. Their potential importance lies with the fact that they may be the basis through which we are able to understand the intentions of others, acquire language and share feelings.

<http://www.unipr.it/arpa/mirror/english/staff/rizzolat.htm>

