

## ***PRESS RELEASE***

### **Japanese Cancer Association and Debiopharm Honour Japanese Research**

***- Professors Ichijo and Mano receive 2008 JCA-Mauvernay Award -***

**Lausanne, Switzerland, October 29, 2008** - Debiopharm Group (Debiopharm), a global biopharmaceutical development specialist that focuses on serious medical conditions and particularly oncology, presented Professors Hidenori Ichijo and Hiroyuki Mano with the 2008 JCA-Mauvernay Award for their outstanding basic and applied research work in oncology. The Awards were presented during the General Assembly of the 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Japanese Cancer Association (JCA) in Japan, by Professor Setsuo Hirohashi, President of the JCA and Dr Rolland-Yves Mauvernay, Founder and President of Debiopharm Group.

The basic research of Professor Ichijo, from the Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Tokyo, focuses on "*Stress Signalling and Cancer*" and more specifically on the discovery of a protein tyrosine kinase called the apoptosis signal-regulating kinase 1 (ASK1). ASK1 controls cellular responses to stress and therefore plays a key role in cancer, innate immunity and wound-induced inflammation.

The research work conducted by Professor Mano, from the Functional Genomics Division at Jichi Medical University, focuses on "*Discovery of a novel fusion oncogene, EML4-ALK present in lung cancer and its clinical implications*". EML4-ALK (echinoderm microtubule associated protein like 4 - anaplastic lymphoma kinase) is a fusion protein resulting from a chromosomal translocation present in a relatively large percentage of NSCLCs (non-small cell lung cancers), a disease in which cancer cells form in the tissues of the lung. This novel onco-gene is a potential target for cancer therapy and biomarker development.

“Significant steps in the understanding of major aspects of oncogenesis were rewarded with this Award. The work of Professors Ichijo and Mano will help the scientific community to better understand the mechanisms involved in cancer, immunity and inflammation, as we strive to bring sufferers more targeted and effective drugs in the near future,” said Kamel Besseghir, CEO of Debiopharm S.A.

In its fourth year, the JCA-Mauvernay Award is organised jointly by the JCA and Debiopharm to honour innovative fundamental and clinical oncology research and to encourage Japanese scientists to make their work available outside Japan.

This year Debiopharm has already presented two Awards in Switzerland: in August, the “Debiopharm Life Sciences Award” designed to mentor and motivate young innovative European researchers in the field of life sciences, and in June, the “Prix Debiopharm Valais pour les Sciences de la Vie” aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship in the life sciences and technology sectors in the canton of Valais.

#### **About Debiopharm Group**

Debiopharm Group is a global biopharmaceutical development specialist that in-licenses promising biologics and small molecule drug candidates. It develops its products for global registration and maximum commercial potential for out-licensing to pharmaceutical partners for sales and marketing.

Debiopharm independently funds the worldwide development of all of its products while

providing expertise in pre-clinical and clinical trials, manufacturing, drug delivery and formulation, and regulatory affairs.

Founded in 1979 and headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, Debiopharm has developed three products with global combined sales in excess of \$2.65 billion in 2007.

For more information on Debiopharm Group, please visit: [www.debiopharm.com](http://www.debiopharm.com).

**Debiopharm S.A. Contacts**

Maurice Wagner  
Director Corporate Affairs & Communications  
Tel.: +41 (0)21 321 01 11  
Fax: +41 (0)21 321 01 69  
[mwagner@debiopharm.com](mailto:mwagner@debiopharm.com)

Jo-Anne Lütjens  
Communications Manager  
Tel.: +41 (0)79 370 27 15  
Fax: +41 (0)21 321 01 69  
[jalutjens@debiopharm.com](mailto:jalutjens@debiopharm.com)

**Additional Media Contacts  
In London**

Maitland  
Brian Hudspith  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7379 5151  
[bhudspith@maitland.co.uk](mailto:bhudspith@maitland.co.uk)

**In New York**

Russo Partners, LLC  
Wendy Lau  
Tel: +1 212-845-4272  
Fax: +1 212-845-4260  
[wendy.lau@russopartnersllc.com](mailto:wendy.lau@russopartnersllc.com)