

**Debiopharm Group™ presents the ‘Debiopharm Group Life Sciences Award 2013’  
And two ‘Junior Debiopharm Group Life Sciences Awards 2013’  
During the annual EPFL SV- Life Science Symposium**

**Lausanne, Switzerland - August 29, 2013** – Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm), the Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical company that focuses on the development of prescription drugs targeting unmet medical needs as well as companion diagnostics, presents today the ‘**Debiopharm Group™ Life Sciences Award 2013**’ to Professor Grégoire Courtine for his outstanding research on ‘Restoring Motor Functions after Spinal Cord Injury’. The two ‘**Junior Debiopharm Group™ Life Sciences Awards 2013**’ are attributed to Dr Leanne Li for her research on cancer and the nervous system and to Dr Stéphane Baudouin for his work on the heterogeneity of psychiatric disorders. Organized by the Brain Mind Institute (**BMI**), the ceremony will take place today at the EPFL (Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne) during the Annual EPFL SV- Life Science Symposium 2013. The theme of this year's symposium is ‘Motor Control - from neural circuits and diseases to neuroprosthetics.’

This year's **award** honors Prof. **Grégoire Courtine** from the International Paraplegic Foundation (IRP) Chair in Spinal Cord Repair, the Center for Neuroprosthetic and Brain Mind Institute, EPFL and adjunct Professor from the University Hospital of Vaud (CHUV). His research on restoring motor function in severely paralyzed people won him the amount of CHF 50'000 of which CHF 40'000 are made available to his institute, whilst CHF 10'000 are for his personal use.

Current therapeutic interventions aren't successful, however Professor Courtine and his team introduced a treatment combining multiple neuroprosthetic systems that restored, for the first time, supraspinal control over complex locomotor movements in rats with a spinal cord injury (SCI) leading to permanent paralysis. Preliminary testing in a paraplegic man suggested that this therapeutic approach might restore some degree of function in humans with severe SCI. A documentary about Courtine's work can be viewed at [www.project-rewalk.com](http://www.project-rewalk.com).

The two ‘**Junior Debiopharm Group™ Life Sciences Awards 2013**’ are granted to Doctors **Leanne Li** from ISREC, School of Life Science, EPFL, and **Stéphane Baudouin** from the Biozentrum of the University of Basel. Each scientist receives CHF 25'000 of which CHF 20'000 go to their respective institutes and CHF 5'000 are for their personal use. The junior awards are destined to young researchers in Switzerland, in the field of cellular and molecular biology. They are ideally at the stage of late postdoctoral studies or launching an independent research group. The selection criteria are based on excellence in previous work and originality of future projects.

“We were impressed by the quality of research that our nominees have provided and are happy to present them with the Awards,” said Rolland-Yves Mauvernay, President and founder of Debiopharm Group™. “We wish them successful careers and are confident that their work will be applied to the development of life saving treatments.”

**Dr Li's** research aims to study the relationship between cancer and the nervous system. How cancer cells utilize neuronal receptors to incorporate and interpret signals from the tumor microenvironment, and launch corresponding programs of proliferation and/or dissemination. How different types of cancer cells might be “guided” by neuronal signals to seed tumors in different tissue ‘soils’, and how the interplay between cancer and the nervous system might contribute to the disturbed general health

condition of cancer patients, such as the profound cancer pain, cachexia, and impaired cognitive function that can even precede chemotherapy. Her future work will focus on “onco-neurology”, in the hope of developing novel and more effective cancer therapeutics.

**Dr Baudouin’s** research focuses on heterogeneity in psychiatric disorders, for instance in the case of autism and psychiatric disorders in general, to which a large number of genes have been linked. In the majority of disorders no curative treatment is available and this heterogeneity is a major problem for therapeutic intervention. In recent unpublished studies, Baudouin provided proof-of-concept for novel treatment approaches in autism and evidence that not only anatomical but also behavioral abnormalities can be rescued. The existence of a core molecular pathway affected in various forms of autism provides new perspectives on the generalization of pharmacological interventions in autism. In his future studies, he will use rodent models to obtain insights in the pathophysiology and treatment of social behavior.

### **About Debiopharm Group™**

Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm) is a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group of companies with a focus on the development of prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs. The group in-licenses, develops and/or co-develops promising biological and small molecule drug candidates having reached clinical development phases I, II or III, as well as earlier stage candidates. It develops its products for global registration and access to the largest number of patients worldwide. The products are out-licensed to pharmaceutical partners for sales and marketing. Debiopharm is also active in the field of companion diagnostics with a view to progressing in the area of personalized medicine. 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.

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

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