

**Debiopharm Group™ presents the ‘Debiopharm Group™ Life Sciences Award 2011’ and two ‘Junior Debiopharm Group™ Awards 2011’ at the ISREC 2011 Life Sciences Symposium**

**Lausanne, Switzerland – September 8, 2011** - Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm), a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group with a focus on drug development and companion diagnostics, will present tomorrow the ‘Debiopharm Group Life Sciences Award 2011’ to Professor Stefano Piccolo as well as two inaugural ‘Junior Debiopharm Group Life Sciences Awards 2011’ to Professor Etienne Meylan and Doctor Volker Busskamp. The award ceremony will take place at the EPFL (Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne) during the ISREC (Swiss Institute for Experimental Cancer Research) 2011 Life Sciences Symposium entitled ‘Hallmarks and horizons of cancer’.

The ‘Debiopharm Group Life Sciences Award 2011’ is granted to Professor Stefano Piccolo from the University of Padua, Italy. He has made extensive contributions to the field of cancer, in particular in dissecting the role of a protein secreted by cells called “transforming growth factor beta (TGFb)”, and the relation of TGFb to intracellular signalling pathways involved in cancer initiation and progression. Professor Piccolo is now working on the role of small RNAs called microRNAs or miRNAs in controlling overall cell signalling. The award amounts to CHF 50’000.- of which CHF 40’000.- are made available to the awardee’s institute, whilst CHF 10’000.- are for personal use.

This year, Debiopharm decided to launch the inaugural ‘Junior Debiopharm Group Life Sciences Awards’. Professor Etienne Meylan from the EPFL and Doctor Volker Busskamp from the Basel-based Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research (FMI), are the recipients of the ‘Junior Debiopharm Group Life Sciences Awards’. Each award amounts to CHF 25’000.- of which CHF 20’000.- are made available to the awardees’ respective institutes, whilst CHF 5’000.- are for 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.

Professor Meylan has just been appointed tenure-track Professor at the EPFL, following his postdoctoral work in the laboratory of Professor Tyler Jacks at MIT. His laboratory at the EPFL focuses on developing mouse models of lung cancer to test new promising anti-cancer compounds.

Doctor Busskamp recently completed a spectacular Ph.D. thesis in applied neuroscience at the FMI (Dr. Botond Roska's laboratory). During his Ph.D., he developed and validated a new type of therapy to repair blind retinas *in vivo*.

“Today’s nominees all provided high quality and innovative work, allowing the jury to reach a unanimous decision,” said Rolland-Yves Mauvernay, President and founder of Debiopharm Group™. “We are happy to recognise and reward these young scientists for their accomplishments. We wish them all the best and hope their research will lead to major discoveries in the medical field in the years to come.”

## **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 maximum commercial potential. 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 personalised 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 on Debiopharm Group™, please visit: [www.debiopharm.com](http://www.debiopharm.com).

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