

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Professor Leroux from ETH receives the Debiopharm Life Sciences Award 2010**

*- One of the most creative researchers of his generation in pharmaceutical technology -*

**Lausanne, Switzerland – September 2, 2010** - Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm), a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group of companies with a focus on the development of innovative prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs, today announced that the ‘Debiopharm Life Sciences Award 2010’ went to Professor Jean-Christophe Leroux for his innovative research on polymer chemistry, nanotechnology and pharmaceutical sciences to yield novel drug therapies. This year, the theme for the Award was “Drug Delivery and Pharmaceutical Technology”. Professor Leroux is an expert in galenic studies from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zürich. He and his institute received CHF 100’000. Funded by Debiopharm, the ceremony took place at the EPFL (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne) during the EPFL School of Life Sciences Symposium entitled “Engineering Life”.

“We congratulate Professor Leroux for his outstanding research,” said Rolland-Yves Mauvernay, President and founder of Debiopharm Group™. “A panel of experts from Debiopharm and the EPFL examined many high-level and promising applications from all over Europe; our decision to nominate Professor Leroux was unanimous. We were seduced by his innovative research, his general expertise and broad overall knowledge in drug delivery. The application file submitted by Professor Leroux was very comprehensive, with an impressive list of publications in high-impact factor pharmaceutical, materials and biomedical journals. He is a leading figure in an area that is likely to revolutionise medical therapeutics in the years to come.”

The development of suitable drug formulations and delivery systems remains a major challenge in the full drug product development and industrialisation process. In his applied research, Professor Leroux is interested in the design of new carriers and materials for various pharmaceutical applications such as drug detoxification and the treatment of celiac disease (intolerance to gluten). Currently different approaches are being assessed as a supportive treatment of celiac disease. The polymeric binder technology which was developed in his laboratory will be further investigated. In parallel, he will examine another known strategy to study the stability of enzymes (exogenous propyl endopeptidases) in the gastro intestinal tract and try to improve it with various new polymers. He will also elaborate imaging tools to study in real time the enzymatic activity *in vivo*. Professor Leroux’s more fundamental research aims to better understand how antisense oligonucleotides (ONs) and small interfering ribonucleic acids (siRNAs) are naturally taken up by cells and to discover ways by which he may enhance this phenomenon. The identification and exploitation of these uptake mechanisms have the potential to change our way of thinking about delivery of siRNAs and to provide basis for developing novel strategies for medicines based on RNA interference.

In 1992, Professor Leroux earned his B.Pharm from Montreal University and in 1995, his Ph.D. from Geneva University. He has held various positions at the Faculty of Pharmacy at Montreal University, from Assistant Professor to Adjunct Professor. Since 2008, Prof. Leroux has headed the laboratory of Drug Formulation and Delivery at the Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zürich. He is among the major experts on liposomes and nanotechnologies in medicine.

### **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. Debiopharm is also prepared to consider 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. Besides drug development, Debiopharm Group has recently embarked 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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