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Frankfurt am Main, October 25, 2010

Professor Cesare Montecucco to receive the 2011 Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize

Frankfurt am Main. The chemist and biologist **Professor Cesare Montecucco**, 62, of the Department of Biomedical Research at the University of Padua, Italy, has won the 100,000 euro Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize 2011 for his contribution to research in the field of bacterial diseases, including tetanus, botulism, anthrax and *Helicobacter pylori* associated diseases. The award was conferred by the Scientific Board of the Paul Ehrlich Foundation. The Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize is among the most prestigious international awards granted in the Federal Republic of Germany in the field of medicine. The award ceremony will take place in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt on March 14, 2011, the birthday of Paul Ehrlich (1854–1915).

Cesare Montecucco is engaged in research into human diseases caused by different pathogens of bacterial and animal origin. He has provided important insights in the molecular pathogenesis of tetanus, botulism, anthrax and gastrointestinal diseases due to *Helicobacter pylori*. Major contributions were those regarding the mechanism of action the neurotoxins that cause botulism and tetanus and tetanus, caused by the tetanus bacterium *Clostridium tetani* and characterized by a muscular rigidity popularly known as “lockjaw.” These neurotoxins provided a major evidence that the SNARE proteins are the core of the nanomachine which mediates neurotransmitter release at the synapse, and more in general of most events of vesicle fusion with the target membrane within the cell.

Professor Cesare Montecucco was born in Trento, Italy, in 1947 and studied chemistry and biology at the University of Padua, Italy, where he is currently Professor of Pathology and Deputy Director of the Scuola Galileiana. He also did research at Cambridge University in the UK, in the Dutch city of Utrecht, at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, France, at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg, Germany and at the University of Costa Rica. Professor Montecucco has published over 250 articles and edited three books. He is a member of the board of various leading scientific journals and acts within the scientific committees of several institutes. In addition, he is a member of the European Molecular Biology Organization, the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, the Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti, the Academia Europaea and the American Academy of Microbiology. For his contributions to the field of infectious diseases, Cesare Montecucco was awarded the Shipley Award of Harvard Medical School in 1993, the Prize of the Italian Consortium for Biotechnology in 1998, the Prize of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hygiene und Mikrobiologie in 2000, the Prize of the Masi

Foundation for Venetian Civilization in 2003, the Feltrinelli Prize for Medicine in 2004 and the Redi Award of the International Society on Toxinology in 2009.

The Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize

The Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize is traditionally presented on Paul Ehrlich's birthday, March 14, in the Frankfurt Paulskirche. It is awarded to scientists in recognition of their special achievements in Paul Ehrlich's field of research, especially immunology, cancer research, hæmatology, microbiology and chemotherapy. Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Bender, Chairman of the Council, will present the award jointly with a representative of the Federal Ministry of Health. The prize, which has been awarded since 1952, is financed by tied donations from the Federal Ministry of Health, companies and the German Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies.

The Paul Ehrlich Foundation

The Paul Ehrlich Foundation is a legally dependent foundation of the Association of Friends and Patrons of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt am Main e.V. The Honorary President of the Foundation, which was set up in 1929 by Hedwig Ehrlich, is the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, who also appoints the elected members of the Council and the Board of Trustees. The Chairman of the Association of Friends and Patrons is at the same time the Chairman of the Council of the Paul Ehrlich Foundation. This committee selects the prizewinners. The President of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University is ex officio member of the Board of Trustees of the Paul Ehrlich Foundation.

Press conference

Professor Cesare Montecucco will present his work at a press conference to be held in the Casino of the Westend Campus of the Goethe University Frankfurt, first floor, room 1.811, Grüneburgplatz 1, 60323 Frankfurt, on March 13, 2011 at 2 p.m. Please note this date in your diary.

Further information

The detailed CV and a photo of the prize winner as well as a list of publications is available from the Paul Ehrlich Foundation Press Office (c/o Dr. Monika Mölders, Telephone: +49 6238 982783, Telefax: +49 6238 982784, E-Mail: Paul-Ehrlich-Stiftung@pvw.uni-frankfurt.de).

Additional information:

Webseiten Prof. Dr. Cesare Montecucco

<http://www.biomed.unipd.it/index.php/en/ricerca/148-montecucco-group>

<http://www.bio.unipd.it/toxin>