

## PRESS RELEASE



### **The 2016 Georges Mathé Prize recognizes research on the immunological determinants of the response to breast cancer treatment**

*Paris, October 19, 2016*

*The 2016 Georges Mathé Prize was presented on October 10, 2016 during the ESMO (European Society of Medical Oncology) meeting in Copenhagen. The Prize, supporting translational research of excellence, was established in memory of the pioneer of cancer research in France, Georges Mathé, deceased in 2010. The Prize was awarded to a young Greek researcher, Doctor Alexios Matikas, a clinical oncologist from the University Hospital Heraklion, for his research project on immunological determinants of response to treatment in breast cancer. The Fellowship will support his research in Karolinska Institutet (Stockholm, Sweden), into the immunological determinants of response to treatment in breast cancer.*

Created in 2011 by the Institut du Cancer et d'Immunogénétique (ICIG) and sponsored by the European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO), the Georges Mathé Prize promotes therapeutic advances and translational research in medical oncology and immunotherapy, honoring the early bench-bedside-bench studies pioneered by Professor Georges Mathé. Bestowed by a jury composed of international scientists, the 35.000 Euro prize is awarded to an outstanding young physician/scientist to enable him/her to pursue a career in translational cancer research.

This year, the prize will support a research project aiming at better understanding the immunological determinants of treatment response in breast cancer, at various stages of the disease (before surgery i.e. neo-adjuvant, post surgery i.e. adjuvant, metastatic). Tumor-host interactions are recognized to be of a fundamental importance in cancer development, in particular the tumor's capability to induce an immunosuppressive environment and evade the host's immune response by the mobilization of various mechanisms. The aim of the project will be to evaluate the relevance of several immunological markers (Tumor Infiltrating Lymphocytes, Tumor Associated Macrophages, PD-L1 expression, etc.) in predicting the response to treatment, and to develop an immune-related gene signature predictive of the response. This work will take place at the prestigious Karolinska Institutet under the supervision of Professor Theodoros Foukakis.

Professor Dimitrios Mavroudis, Head of the Medical Oncology department at Heraklion University Hospital, was thrilled by the award of the Prize to Alexios Matikas: *"Alexios is an outstanding fellow with admirable knowledge. He has already authored many publications. He is also a fine clinician dedicated to his patients."* Dr Matikas shared his pride and thankfulness: *"I feel very lucky to be able*

*to continue my research at a prestigious center such as the Karolinska Institutet under the guidance Professor Foukakis, and I thank the ESMO and the Georges Mathé Prize sponsors”.*

By funding translational research into the immunological determinants of the response to cancer therapy, the 2016 Georges Mathé Prize gives praise to the visionary works of Professor Georges Mathé, the pioneer of cancer immunotherapy, adoptive immunotherapy with the first-ever bone marrow graft to treat a leukemia patient and the development of the « Graft vs. Leukemia » concept, and active immunotherapy by stimulation of the patient’s immune system, in particular with BCG therapy, still the gold standard today for the management of early-stage bladder cancer. Georges Mathé was convinced that the activation of the immune system against the tumor was the only way to eliminate “the last tumor cell”, and the recent successes obtained by immunotherapy in melanoma seem to prove him right, more than fifty years after his pioneering works.

### **The Georges Mathé Prize: at the heart of ESMO**

Georges Mathé, the French pioneer in oncology and first to successfully achieve with his team a bone marrow transplant to treat leukemia, played a key role in the creation of ESMO, serving as the very first President of the Society. ESMO pays him an annual tribute by sponsoring the Georges Mathé Prize, which is now awarded as part of its annual congress. ESMO recognition gives the Prize a major visibility.

The Prize is made possible by the financial support of the Institut du Cancer et d'Immunogénétique (ICIG) and the pharmaceutical companies Ipsen and the Debiopharm Group:

*The **Institut du Cancer et d'Immunogénétique (ICIG)**, Villejuif, was founded in 1961 at the Hospital Paul Brousse by Prof. Georges Mathé, who directed and developed it until 1990. It incorporates INSERM research laboratories and a clinical service of cancerology. Professor Mathé served as the Institute’s Honorary President from 2003-2010.*

*Current President, Prof. David Marchover, disciple of Georges Mathé and practicing at the Blood and Tumoral Disease Service of the Hospital Paul Brousse that he had created, is honored to support the prize as a tribute to his former mentor and friend.*

***Ipsen** is a global specialty-driven pharmaceutical group with total sales exceeding €1.4 billion in 2015. Ipsen sells more than 20 drugs in more than 115 countries, with a direct commercial presence in more than 30 countries. Ipsen’s ambition is to become a leader in specialty healthcare solutions for targeted debilitating diseases. Its fields of expertise cover oncology, neurosciences and endocrinology (adult & pediatric). Ipsen’s commitment to oncology is exemplified through its growing portfolio of key therapies improving the care of patients suffering from prostate cancer, bladder cancer and neuro-endocrine tumors. Ipsen also has a significant presence in primary care. Moreover, the Group has an active policy of partnerships. Ipsen’s R&D is focused on its innovative and differentiated technological platforms, peptides and toxins, located in the heart of the leading biotechnological and life sciences hubs (Les Ulis/Paris-Saclay, France; Slough/Oxford, UK; Cambridge, US). In 2015, R&D expenditure totaled close to €193 million. The Group has more than 4,600 employees worldwide. Ipsen’s shares are traded on segment A of Euronext Paris (stock code: IPN, ISIN code: FR0010259150)*

and eligible to the “Service de Règlement Différé” (“SRD”). The Group is part of the SBF 120 index. Ipsen has implemented a Sponsored Level I American Depositary Receipt (ADR) program, which trade on the over-the-counter market in the United States under the symbol IPSEY. For more information on Ipsen, visit [www.ipсен.com](http://www.ipсен.com).

The contribution of Ipsen to the Georges Mathé prize demonstrates Ipsen’s support to therapeutic innovation, and translates in its profound admiration for the Prof. Georges Mathé, his dedication to patients and his pioneer work in oncology. Ipsen also acknowledges Prof. Mathé’s major contribution to the clinical evaluation of triptorelin (Décapeptyl®), a lead molecule in Ipsen’s portfolio, with the first publication of the phase II results in 1986 along with Prof. A. Schally (Nobel laureate) and Dr. Mauvernay, the founder of the Debiopharm Group™.

**Debiopharm Group™** (Debiopharm) is a pharmaceutical research group founded by Dr. Rolland-Yves Mauveray in 1979 and based in Switzerland. The group uses its scientific and clinical expertise to answer unmet medical needs. Debiopharm in-licenses promising molecule drug candidates. Debiopharm develops its products for global registration and maximum commercial potential for out-licensing to pharmaceutical partners for sales and marketing.

The history of Debiopharm and Dr. Mauveray is intimately linked to that of Prof. Georges Mathé. Their long friendship, lively intuition, scientific and intellectual rigor indeed led to the development of oxaliplatine. Discovered in Japan, this molecule has become, owing to the work of Prof Mathé and to the tenacity of Dr. Mauvernay and their teams, a new international standard in the treatment of colon cancer and a lead product of Debiopharm and its licensees.

Dr. Mauvernay and his group are proud to honor the memory of Georges Mathé, one of the most important researchers of French medicine, with the recent award of this prize at the ESMO Congress.

**More information:**

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