



The Belgian Industrial R&D board (BiR&D) grants its annual awards for multidisciplinary research

Brussels, 8 May 2019 – *The Belgian Industrial Research & Development board (BiR&D) has granted during its annual event, the awards for multidisciplinary research to doctoral students who have cooperated across the boundaries of their research domain on research themes with high societal and industrial relevance.*

In the area of Science&Technology, the BiR&D PhD Award was granted to Sander Van den Bosch from KU Leuven for his study on Reductive Catalytic Fractionation in the Lignocellulosic Biorefinery. In the area of Life&Health Sciences, Stéphanie Liénart from the Catholic University of Louvain was awarded for her PhD thesis on the role of Blocking Immunosuppression by human Tregs with antibodies against GARP/latent TGF- β 1 complexes. Both grantees receive 10.000 euro. The Award event was attended by high-level representatives from industry, universities and government.

The **BiR&D Awards for Multidisciplinary Research** are annual awards granted to PhD students that have combined academic research of outstanding quality with a multidisciplinary approach, on research themes that have a strong economic, societal or ecological impact. With these awards, BiR&D stresses the importance of multidisciplinary cooperation between academia and industry in order to reinforce Belgium's R&D ecosystem. BiR&D strives at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of industrial research in Belgium, and also aims at enhancing Belgium's image as a preferred location for industrial research and development.

Marnix Botte, Chairman of BiR&D and Senior Director Transformation Programs Nokia and R&D Nokia Belgium: *"To keep international companies in Belgium and to further develop our industry, industrial research in Belgium must be nurtured. It is important for R&D and innovation managers to exchange best practices and continuously improve, but we also have to invest in long-term cooperation with knowledge centres such as universities, in an atmosphere of professionalism and confidence. BiR&D is playing a pivotal role in encouraging strong cooperation in the R&D landscape in Belgium and this award is one of the instruments to implement this."*

BiR&D (*Belgian industrial Research & Development board*) is a non-profit association of international companies, having a significant R&D activity in Belgium. The association assembles senior R&D managers from 26 industrial companies: 3M, AB Inbev, AGC-Glass Europe, Atlas Copco, Baxter, Bekaert, Cargill, Carmeuse, John Cockerill, Coca Cola, Deme, Etex, GSK Biological, Janssen Pharma (Johnson&Johnson), Laborelec, Lhoist Group, Magotteaux, Nokia, OCAS-ArcelorMittal, Procter & Gamble, Puratos, Recticel, Solvay, Total, UCB Biopharma and Umicore. Together these companies employ more than 75,000 people in Belgium, including more than 8,000 in research and development (R&D). BiR&D was created in 2008, under the auspices of the Prince Philip Foundation, and operates in close cooperation with the sector federations Agoria (technology industry) and Essenscia (chemicals and life sciences), as well as with GRD ((Groupe permanent Recherche-Développement).

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