

## Biotech SME Awards 2019: Recognising breakthrough science in Europe

### PRESS RELEASE

**Brussels 08 November 2019:** EuropaBio is delighted to announce the winners of the 10<sup>th</sup> Most Innovative European Biotech SME Awards: **Confo Therapeutics**, **Carbiolice** and **BioMass Protein** have been awarded in the categories of healthcare, industrial and agricultural biotechnology, respectively and will receive 10,000 EUR each together with a two-year free membership at EuropaBio. Runner-up awards in this year's competition were presented to **Mogrify Ltd.** in the healthcare biotech category, to **Ingelia** in the industrial biotech category and **Biome Makers** in the agricultural biotech category.



From left to right: Peter & Mette Lübeck, Co-Founders, BioMass Protein; Cedric Ververken, CEO, Confo Therapeutics; Nadia Auclair, President, Carbiolice

This year's edition of the *Most Innovative European Biotech SME Awards* saw more than 40 companies, from across the EU, competing for the three coveted awards. Their outstanding contribution towards tackling grand challenges through the application of biotechnology were acknowledged during a dinner ceremony in Brussels on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, where each of the finalists took part in a pitching session, going head-to-head, across the three categories, and presenting their innovations to an audience of EU policymakers, industry representatives and venture capitalists. During the pitching session,

MEP Andrius Kubilius addressed the audience and highlighted the importance of biotechnology and its ability to change lives for the better. A European Commission keynote was delivered by Carlo Pettinelli, Director of Consumer, Environmental and Health Technologies at DG GROW, who highlighted the role of biotech SMEs in ensuring the future of many of the growth industries, their products and processes made available to European citizens and their ability to tackle the climate crisis.

During the evening dinner reception, a fireside chat between Karen Bernstein, Co-Founder and Chairman of BioCentury, and Peter Heinrich, Chair of EuropaBio's SME Platform, saw an interesting discussion on the biotech ecosystem in Europe and its role in a global context. Before the presentation of the awards, MEP Anthea McIntyre addressed the audience to emphasise the need for science-based policy making in the EU. Drawing from personal experience, MEP McIntyre highlighted the need for a framework that enables SMEs to have the confidence and assurance that, if successful, they will receive adequate returns on all the time and hard work they invest.

Peter Heinrich, Chair of EuropaBio's SME Platform commented: *'EU Biotech SMEs are on the leading edge of innovation as represented by the winners and runners-up of this year's competition, yet their achievements and capabilities often go unnoticed. It is important to offer a platform for public recognition to demonstrate their outstanding work and benefits to society, and to simultaneously recognise the importance of supportive European policy making for such companies to thrive'*

EuropaBio Secretary General, Joanna Dupont-Inglis, added: *'EuropaBio's Biotech SME Awards provide a rare but valuable opportunity to see what these small, dynamic and high value enterprises are contributing - we are proud to honour all finalists who are achieving incredible things in the quest to provide benefits to people and planet in Europe and beyond.'*

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## **The Winners**

### Healthcare Biotech Category: **Confo Therapeutics (Belgium)**

Confo Therapeutics is a pioneering biopharmaceutical company building a portfolio of transformative medicines for the treatment of serious diseases using its proprietary Confo® technology, a proprietary GPCR conformation-sensitive drug discovery engine. Confo Therapeutics was spun out of Vrije Universiteit Brussel and VIB in 2015 and operates across two sites in Belgium, in Ghent and Brussels. Headed by an experienced and dynamic leadership team, the company has raised more than €40 million (both dilutive and non-dilutive funding) from a strong syndicate of international investors.

### Industrial Biotech Category: **Carbiolice (France)**

Carbiolice is a joint-venture established in 2016, based on the shared and complementary ambitions of CARBIOS, a green chemical company developing enzymatic technologies; of LIMAGRAIN, a global seed company and of the SPI investment fund operated by Bpifrance. Combining its expertise in compounding, formulation and process development with the enzyme technology developed by CARBIOS, Carbiolice has shown that home composting can become a viable end-of-life option for single plastics based on PLA while helping to achieve the goal of zero waste.

### Agricultural Biotech Category: **BiomassProtein (Denmark)**

BiomassProtein is a Danish SME, providing a patent pending technology for building and operating sustainable, turn-key plant proteins factories. They use technology to extract plant proteins from one of most commonly available and inexpensive green crops: grass. The plant proteins can be used in both animal feed and human food applications, and there is a huge and growing demand over the next 20 years.

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## **The Runners-Up**

### *Healthcare Biotech Category: **Mogrify (United Kingdom)***

Mogrify Ltd. is aiming to transform the development of life-saving cell therapies. The UK-based SME has developed a proprietary direct cellular conversion technology that makes it possible to transform (transmogrify) adult cell types into other types without needing to enter the stem cell stage. This breakthrough innovation has the potential to not only save the researchers developing cell therapies from investing huge amounts of time and efforts but also to lower costs in the development and manufacturing process of cell therapies.

### *Industrial Biotech Category: **Ingelia (Spain)***

Ingelia is based in Valencia and strives to constantly find the most sustainable solution in order to upgrade local resources into high value biobased products. The innovative company developed an innovative process of hydrothermal carbonization of biomass (HTC process). Ingelia can offer solutions for biomass valorization, solving the problem of organic waste management, generating a solid biofuel in harmony with the objectives of the European Commission.

### *Agricultural Biotech Category: **Biome Makers (Spain)***

Biome Makers is a Spanish biotech SME born in Silicon Valley, specialised in the identification and understanding of the microbiome. Thanks to DNA sequencing technologies and proprietary Intelligent computing systems they are able to ease detailed information and recommendations that allow customers to improve their agricultural production and the quality of their products.

Find more information on <http://biotechsmeawards.eu>

## **ENDS**

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### **About EuropaBio**

EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries, is the recognised voice of the European biotech community championing world-class solutions for society's challenges. EuropaBio and its members are committed to the socially responsible use of biotechnology to improve quality of life, to prevent, diagnose, treat and cure diseases, to improve the quality and quantity of food and feedstuffs and to move towards a biobased and zero-

waste economy. EuropaBio represents 81 associate and corporate members and 17 national biotechnology associations and bioregions.

Read more about our work at [www.europabio.org](http://www.europabio.org).

