

## Italy and France awarded for their Most Innovative EU Biotech SMEs 2014

8 October, Brussels

This year, two companies have been announced as winners of EuropaBio's Most Innovative Biotech SME Award 2014. The award ceremony took place today in Brussels, as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the European Biotech Week. Antti Peltomäki, Deputy Director General, DG Enterprise & Industry at the European Commission, who presented the award during the ceremony, named both French healthcare biotech SME **Erytech Pharma** and **Bio-on**, an Italian industrial biotech SME – as winners of the award.

The two winners saw off tough competition from three other runners up: [Biosyntia](#) (Denmark), [Autifony](#) (UK) and [to-BBB](#) (the Netherlands). The top five candidates were selected from a total of 35 applicants to this year's award, now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year. Entries were received from all across Europe. The five finalists presented their achievements in front of an audience of approximately 100 guests including Jos Peeters, Managing Partner at Capricorn Venture Partners, Kay Swinburne MEP, Philippe De Backer MEP, as well as other high-level policy makers, biotechnology CEOs and venture capitalists.

[Erytech Pharma](#) (France) was awarded for developing an innovative concept to starve cancer cells in specific essential nutrients and quickly induce their death without impairing any healthy cells. Its novel breakthrough technology consists in the use of red blood cells loaded with therapeutic enzyme to develop safe targeted therapies to treat cancer.

[Bio-on](#) (Italy) was recognized for designing and patenting the first fully biobased plastic PHAs obtained from agricultural waste, co and by-products through natural bacterial fermentation processes excluding chemical solvents. The resulting bioplastic is 100% naturally biodegradable in both water and soil and suitable for use in particularly demanding application areas such as: biomedical devices, automotive, food packaging and others.

Speaking at the event, Tom Saylor, CEO of Arcor and Chair of EuropaBio's SME Platform stated: "This year's winners and runners up represent the strength of biotechnology's potential in Europe across several important sectors and geographies. The most innovative Biotech SME Award remains an excellent opportunity to raise the profile and importance of this sector for the future of Europe's citizens and growth."

This year's award ceremony had a particular focus on financing, with the European Investment Bank presenting their new "Growth Financing Facility" for funding innovative companies in the EU, as well as the European Commission illustrating their new "SME Instrument" under Horizon 2020. Additionally, an overview of the new package of Public Private Partnerships (PPP), announced recently by the Commission, was given, with a particular focus on IMI II and the new PPP for biobased industries.

The event is followed tomorrow 9 October by the '[ENTENTE Life Science Investor Forum](#)', which will give R&D intensive biotech SMEs the opportunity to pitch their innovation research and financing requirements in front of an international jury consisting of about 40 business angels, venture capitalists, corporate investors and other industry experts. Participation is based on prior selection by the judging panel and the top 28 most attractive companies to investors were invited to join the forum today.

**EuropaBio's**  
MOST INNOVATIVE  
EUROPEAN BIOTECH  
SME AWARD



**ENDS**

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For more information about the European Biotechnology week, please click [here](#).

### **About EuropaBio**

EuropaBio is the European Association for Bioindustries, bringing together bioscience companies from all fields of research and development, testing, manufacturing and distribution of biotechnology products. Its corporate, associate and national association members are involved in research, development, testing, manufacturing and commercialisation of biotechnology products and processes, and have a wide range of activities: human and animal health care, diagnostics, bio-informatics, chemicals, crop protection, agriculture, food and environmental products and services.

### **About the SME Platform**

EuropaBio's SME Platform focuses its activities on highlighting challenges and financial constraints that biotech SMEs face, and developing policy recommendations to optimise EU and member state funding instruments for biotech SMEs. The SME Platform brings together CEOs, of SMEs, National Biotech Associations, Venture Capitalists and private banks, European financial institutions, representatives from the EC, and other interested stakeholders.