



PRESS RELEASE

New European Centre for Chirality to offer world class Analytical and Scientific Services for Advancements in Chiral Chemical Processes

Ghent, Antwerp, Belgium – 22nd-September 2010: Ghent University, the University of Antwerp and BioTools Europe Ltd are delighted to announce a new partnership to create the European Centre for Chirality (EC², chirality.ua.ac.be). EC² is a unique blend of expertise and resources that brings together leading authorities dedicated to advancing the understanding the role chirality plays in biological processes. The EC² mission is to help academic and industrial scientists develop a broad range of chirality related applications through offering services ranging from the determination of absolute chiral configurations, Vibrational Optical Activity (VOA) measurements, computational modelling including expert consultancy, and education workshops to open access VOA instrumentation. Given the importance of chirality in e.g., drug discovery and development, the information obtained using these techniques can benefit productivity in drug discovery, diagnostics research, drug development and registration. The new Centre, based at Antwerp and Ghent, Belgium, will comprise a team of dedicated scientists, including some of the world's most respected leaders in VOA, using an array of advanced analytical instrumentation and modelling software able to fulfil the demanding analysis such challenging applications require.

Dr Edwin Kellenbach, Departmental Head Analytical Sciences at Merck explained, “analysis of the chiral formations of both small molecules and biological molecules (simply put, the right and left handed versions of molecules) are now an essential part of the discovery and development of new medicines, for example the understanding of chirality has played a key role in the success of 7 out of 10 of the latest blockbusters drugs including Lipitor, Nexium and Plavix. The challenge faced by many of us working in the pharmaceutical sector and underpinned by pressure from market regulators is to obtain high quality data about chirality sufficiently early in the discovery of new molecules to be able to make decisions that will determine the success or failure of the molecules in achieving clinical efficacy and safety. EC² will help scientists meet these challenges.”

Managing Director of BioTools Europe Frank Trundle, said, "one challenge we recognised is the initial capital cost of investing in analytical instrumentation which can be limiting and may take long periods of time to approve through academic and corporate budget cycles. To further support the research needs of scientists we will also offer open access services through EC² and provide fast affordable access to critical analysis, modelling, and expertise of the highest standards". Dr. Sergey Sergeev (Chief Operations Officer at EC²) added: "The creation of EC² will enable many scientists to gain easy access to a wide body of knowledge, know-how, and advanced VOA instrumentation to provide fast and reliable chirality-based analyses. This, combined with our consultancy, and training programmes, will help to provide deeper insights into molecular structure and function than ever before". We are proud to be sponsored by Gaussian Inc for supporting this centre with advanced quantum chemistry modelling software.

The Centre will open on December 2nd 2010, and to mark this occasion EC² will hold a day-long scientific programme and show-case BioTools advanced instrumentation. Attending the launch will be EC² experts, including Prof. Patrick Bultinck (Ghent University), Prof. Wouter Herrebout (University of Antwerp), Prof. Laurence Nafie (Syracuse University, New York) and Dr. Rina Dukor (President of BioTools Inc).

Key VOA instruments will be available for demonstration, including Vibrational Circular Dichroism (VCD, accepted by regulators as being able to provide absolute configurations) and Raman Optical Activity (ROA).

For further information, please contact either

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Notes for editors

About Ghent University

Founded in 1817 as a Latin-speaking State University by William I, King of the Netherlands, Ghent University is a relatively young university. Over the years eminent scientists such as Joseph Plateau (physicist, considered as a pioneer in the development of motion pictures), Leo Baekeland (inventor of Bakelite), Corneel Heymans (Nobel Prize winner in Medicine) and Friedrich August Kekulé (father of the cyclic structure of benzene) studied and worked at Ghent University.

Today, Ghent University is one of the leading institutions of higher education and research in the Low Countries. Ghent University is an open, committed and pluralistic university with a broad international perspective.

Located in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium and the cultural and economical heart of Europe, Ghent University is an active partner in national and international educational, scientific and industrial cooperation and plays a leading role in the academic and scientific world. Ghent University attaches great interest to a transparent organization structure and its support to spin-offs and other new initiatives.

www.ugent.be

About the University of Antwerp

The University of Antwerp is characterized by its high standards in education, internationally competitive research and entrepreneurial approach. With 13,000 students it is the third largest university in Flanders. The University of Antwerp offers high-quality education programmes in seven faculties on three campuses. One of the main focuses is quality in research. The university has five research centres of excellence and a number of autonomous and interfaculty institutes. Together with four university colleges for professional education is the University of Antwerp part of the regional association Antwerp University Association (AUHA).

The university is located in Antwerp, the second largest port in Europe and a city with a rich cultural heritage. The university maintains close ties with the business world and with society at large, creating a win-win situation for research and cooperation.

www.ua.ac.be

About BioTools:

Formed in 2000 BioTools is an established recognised leading international business that develops, manufactures and markets a range of advanced VCD, ROA instruments and software for a wide range of Chiral applications.

www.btools.com

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