

Apeiron Nominated for the Most Important European Biotechnology Award

Date: 08-20-2010 03:41 PM CET

Category: [Science & Education](#)

Press release from: [Apeiron](#)

Agency: **PR&D**

Vienna-based biotech company Apeiron Biologics AG has been nominated as one of three finalists for the European Biotechnica Award. The Biotechnica Award, which is presented by Deutsche Messe AG as part of the sector's leading trade fair, is regarded as Europe's most prestigious biotech award. Apeiron is the only unlisted finalist. The company first caught the attention of industry insiders in January 2010 when it signed a licensing agreement with GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) valued at EUR 236 million for the rights to Apeiron's lead product APN01.

Today, the Vienna-based biotech company APEIRON Biologics AG confirmed the nomination as a finalist for the European Biotechnica Award, together with two other competitors. The award distinguishes companies operating in the field of biotechnology and life sciences which have excelled in the sector through innovative products, services and business ideas. The award will be presented by Deutsche Messe AG as kick-off to the industry's leading trade fair, Biotechnica, which is to be held this year from October 5th-7th in Hannover.

An Eventful Year for Apeiron

Only six months ago, a licensing agreement with a total deal volume of approx. EUR 236 million was signed for the lead product APN01, a drug candidate for treatment of Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). This agreement with GSK was the starting point for the expansion of the company's development pipeline, focussing on the field of biological and immunological cancer therapies. As Dr. Hans Loibner, CEO of Apeiron states: "The licensing deal with GSK has contributed substantially to strengthening Apeiron's financial base. As such, we are now able to diversify our pipeline, both through in-house developed projects, as well as by licensing-in more established clinical projects. The nomination by the jury of the European Biotechnica Award has confirmed to us and to potential licensing partners that the path Apeiron has taken is the right one. It goes without saying that we are very pleased about this nomination!"

Taking the Road Less Travelled

Together with Apeiron, Addex Pharmaceuticals from Switzerland and Galapagos Genomics from Belgium qualified for the final round this year. In contrast to Apeiron, both other companies are listed on stock exchanges. This is something that makes Apeiron's nomination particularly interesting to investors. In connection with the GSK deal, Apeiron stunned industry experts when the company disclosed that professional development of the then licensed-out lead product had been carried out from basic research until completion of the first clinical phase without venture capital and involving a total sum of no more than around EUR 6.5 million. Commenting on this success, Dr. Loibner stated that "Apeiron is in the fortunate position of being able to draw on a wealth of expertise. On the one hand, the company has the experience of being able to identify promising and innovative projects. On the other hand, it is able to implement its projects in a targeted and focused way – from pre-clinical to advanced clinical testing stages – in accordance with the highest industry standards, and is capable of designing clinical development to be as efficient as possible. Of course, all this maximises the value that is generated within the company – as the GSK deal has impressively shown."

About Apeiron (August 2010)

Apeiron Biologics AG is a privately financed Biotech company based in Vienna. In February 2010, the then lead product APN01 (recombinant human Angiotensin Converting Enzyme 2, rhACE2), an enzyme-based bio-therapeutic for treatment of Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) and a series of other diseases, was licensed out to GSK in a milestone-based agreement for approx. EUR 236 million. Currently, building on an existing set of innovative in-house projects, Apeiron is expanding its portfolio with clinical projects up to Phase II with a focus on biologic / immunologic therapy of cancer. Apeiron employs 15 members of staff at its main site, the Campus Vienna Biocenter.

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