

## Press release

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### **RHODIA AWARDS PROFESSOR AVELINO CORMA THE RHODIA PIERRE-GILLES DE GENNES PRIZE FOR SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY**

**Paris - October 22, 2010** ----- The 2010 Rhodia Pierre-Gilles de Gennes Prize for Science and Industry has been awarded to Professor Avelino Corma from the University of Valencia, Spain. Professor Corma has been recognized for his outstanding contribution in the field of heterogeneous catalysis applied to fine chemicals synthesis, petroleum refining, renewable energy sources and protection of the environment.

Pr Corma's research group has developed new catalysts, particularly through a very extensive knowledge of zeolites synthesis and structures. These catalysts apply to a very wide range of processes, from improving octane content in fuels, converting heavy oil to clean high-cetane diesel or producing higher olefin yields in fluid catalytic cracking. After having developed catalysts and processes for the efficient removal of nitrates from contaminated water streams, he is currently working on new catalysts for chemical routes using renewable raw materials extracted from plants and biomass.

Pr Corma's contribution in catalysis continues to play a pre-eminent role in increasing energy and atom efficiency, replacing toxic reactants and intermediates with more benign versions and complex processes with simpler and more integrated schemes. It contributes in particular to enhancing reaction yields and reducing undesired by-product formation.

Chair of the selection panel, Paul Chaikin, professor at New York University and a member of the US National Academy of Science, described the science of Professor Corma as *“one of the most elegant demonstrations of how fundamental knowledge of chemistry and engineering has been translated into advanced chemical processes and how seamless and effective industry-academia collaborations can benefit mankind”*, adding *“Avelino Corma has advanced the coupling of chemistry and engineering concepts with unprecedented creativity, cleverness and insight”*.

Professor Corma's research is a perfect example of how to bring academic research closer to the world of industry, while incorporating the principles of sustainable development - in complete alignment with the criteria of the Rhodia Pierre-Gilles de Gennes Prize.

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Created in 2008, the Prize is worth €200,000, divided between the research scientist and a grant intended to finance his work. The first Prize was awarded to Sir Richard Friend, Cavendish Professor at the University of Cambridge.

The awards ceremony will take place on December 15 during a scientific conference on green chemistry.

*Rhodia is an international chemical company resolutely committed to sustainable development. As a leader in its businesses, the Group aims to improve its customers' performance through the pursuit of operational excellence and its ability to innovate. Rhodia is the partner of major players in the automotive, electronics, flavors and fragrances, health, personal and home care markets, consumer goods and industrial markets. The Group employs around 13,600 people worldwide and generated sales of €4.03 billion in 2009. Rhodia is listed on Euronext Paris.*

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