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Gramibactin is Leibniz Drug of the Year 2019

Successful Leibniz Conference on Bioactive Compounds 2019 draws to an end



Group photo of the Leibniz Conference on Bioactive Compounds 2019 (Photo: Leibniz Research Alliance Bioactive Compounds and Biotechnology).

Scientists from the member institutes of the [Leibniz Research Alliance "Bioactive Compounds and Biotechnology"](#) came together for this year's Leibniz Conference on Bioactive Compounds in Dresden from April 1 to 2, 2019. This year, the Leibniz Institute for Polymer Research (IPF) acted as host and welcomed 75 participants in the Martha Fraenkel Hall of the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden. The conference served - as usual - as a platform for exchange and discussion as well as for the presentation of scientific results in the form of lectures and poster presentations. After the welcome by Prof. Brigitte Voit, Scientific Director of the IPF, and [Prof. Ludger Wessjohann](#), Spokesman of the Leibniz Research Alliance, Keynote Speaker **Prof. Marion Ansorge-Schumacher** (Technical University Dresden) gave a talk on "Enzyme preparation for applied 'non-conventional' biocatalysis". Subsequently, the prizes "Leibniz Research Award 2019" and "Leibniz Drug of the Year 2019" were awarded.

This year's winner of the Research Award is **Prof. Wittko Francke** from the University of Hamburg. He discovered a number of biological agents derived from insects, fungi and plants. In addition to the chemical description of complex structures such as insect pheromones, he is greatly interested in the biological and chemical synthesis and biological activity of the discovered compounds. The results of his work contributed to the development of environmentally friendly pest control.

The "Leibniz Drug of the Year" award was presented this year for the discovery of the substance **Gramibactin** and its characterization. The award was established by the Alliance to recognize important research activities in the field of bioactive agents within the Leibniz Association. The winner in 2019 is the research team of Professor Christian Hertweck from the Leibniz Institute for Natural Product Research and Infection Biology (HKI) Jena. The bacterial molecule Gramibactin has great importance for food production: it allows plants to absorb more iron from the soil. The increased intake of iron can promote the growth of plants and thus higher yields.

In addition to the talk and poster presentations, the conference offered the opportunity to present the so-called "seed money" projects. These collaborative start-up projects are funded to foster scientific collaboration between two or more members in order to facilitate the development of larger projects. Especially for junior research



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groups this is a good opportunity for the uncomplicated entry into interdisciplinary projects.