

Brussels, 11 October 2007

## European Commission congratulates European winners of Nobel science prizes

***Four European scientists have been awarded the Nobel prizes for Medicine, Physics and Chemistry. Sir Martin Evans, of Cardiff University, shared the Nobel Prize for Medicine with two scientists based in America for their work on mouse genetics. Albert Fert of Université Paris-Sud and CNRS and Peter Grünberg of Forschungszentrum Jülich shared the Nobel Prize for Physics for their discovery of the effect underlying data retrieval from hard disks. Gerhard Ertl of the Fritz-Haber Institute of the Max Planck Society in Berlin has been honoured with the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his study of chemical processes on solid surfaces.***

*"We have to go back many years to find the last time that the majority of Nobel laureates in the science prizes were Europeans" said European Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik. "My warmest congratulations go to these talented scientists. Their sense of achievement will first and foremost be a personal one, with the Prizes recognising their contribution to science. But I hope they will also feel as sense of pride in showing that European science is alive and well, and producing world-class results. I'm sure their success will serve as an inspiration for the younger generation of scientists, and as a spur to policy-makers to continue in their efforts to ensure Europe's reputation as an excellent place for science: a true .knowledge society."*

European Commission Vice President Günter Verheugen, who last year gave the award for Inventor of the Year to Professor Grünberg for the same discovery which led to his Nobel Prize, welcomed the Nobel Prize for professors Grünberg and Fert as a "major achievement for research and innovation in Europe". "The winning of the Nobel prize shows Europe as a centre of science and innovation. I congratulate the Nobel Laureates most warmly, as they showcase the potential of European research not only to generate great inventions, but also to contribute to the competitiveness of our economy. I hope other and future European Inventors of the Year will be able to get the acclaim from the Nobel Prize committee or international scientific institutions. This prize will be an impetus for other European inventors and innovators to continue their research with even more vigour."

The research groups led by Professors Fert and Ertl are involved in projects funded from the EU's Research Framework Programmes, looking at respectively "Advanced magnetic oxides for responsive engineering" and "Integrated Design of Catalytic Nanomaterials for a Sustainable Production".

The European Inventor of the Year Award is a joint initiative of the European Commission and the European Patent Office (EPO) and was handed out for the first time in 2006.