



**Coordinated by: CONSORZIO INTERUNIVERSITARIO
NAZIONALE
PER LA SCIENZA E TECNOLOGIA DEI MATERIALI**

Florence, September 16th, 2006

Olivier Kahn International Award

The MAGMANet Network of Excellence and the members of the Olivier Kahn Award International Jury are pleased to announce that the laureate of the first Olivier Kahn International Award is Dr. Wolfgang Wernsdorfer.

Olivier Kahn was a pioneer in Molecular Magnetism, brilliant scientist and teacher, deeply concerned by the promotion of talented young scientists. The MAGMANet European Network of Excellence has decided to create a prestigious Award bearing his name, the Olivier Kahn International Award, to honour a young scientist who has received his Ph. D. less than ten years ago. The award, an “Olivier Kahn Medal”, designed by La Monnaie de Paris, is accompanied by a prize of 10,000 euros, to allow the laureate that can be used for research and to participate to major international conferences.

The laureate, Dr. Wolfgang Wernsdorfer, born in Würzburg, Germany, in 1966, received his education in Physics in Würzburg, Lyon, and Grenoble, where he is at present Research Director at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. During the first years of his scientific career he has developed a unique device for measuring magnetic properties with a billion times higher sensitivity than commercial magnetometers. His instrument allows observing the magnetic behaviour of molecular nano-magnets containing less than a thousand magnetic centers. Dr. Wernsdorfer has exploited this opportunity to get a deep insight into peculiar phenomena such as the tunneling of magnetization in molecular clusters. Almost all groups working worldwide on synthesizing molecular magnets benefit from the collaboration with him; about 250 systems with possible single-molecule magnet behaviour have been studied so far in Wolfgang’s laboratory. Dr. Wernsdorfer has played a leading role in pushing decisively the knowledge on molecular magnetism to where we are now.

Wolfgang Wernsdorfer says: *“Everyday life is full of useful magnets, solids, oxides, metals and alloys. On the contrary, molecules are most often considered as non-magnetic materials. However, recent discoveries show that molecules can bear large magnetic moments that can have a stable orientation like traditional magnets. They have therefore been called single-molecule magnets and they might be the ultimate limit for information storage. They do not only exhibit the classical macroscale property of a magnet, but also new*

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quantum properties such as quantum tunnelling of magnetization and quantum phase interference, the properties of a microscale entity. Such quantum phenomena are advantageous for some challenging applications, e.g. molecular information storage or quantum computing. In order to explore these possibilities, I am building new and very precise setups, developing new methods and strategies, and studying the best candidate systems, together with my colleagues physicists, chemists and engineers”.

The international jury delivering the Award met in Florence on Saturday, September 16th, and selected the laureate among ten young brilliant scientists, chemists or physicists, having contributed to the development of molecular magnetism in Europe and having provided the international community with outstanding scientific results.

The Award will be presented on the occasion of the First European Conference in Molecular Magnetism, organized by the MAGMANet European Network of Excellence, to be held in Tomar, Portugal, on October 10-15. The laureate will present an invited lecture on this occasion.

The next Olivier Kahn Award competition will take place in 2008.

MAGMANet Network of Excellence

The members of the Olivier Kahn International Jury

Sine Larsen, Professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark and Director of Research, European Synchrotron Radiation Facility, Grenoble, France

Roberto Caciuffo, Professor, Head Actinide Research, European Commission, Directorate General Joint Research Centre, Institute for Transuranium Elements, Karlsruhe, Germany, and Ancona University, Italy

Ernesto Carmona Guzman, Professor, Sevilla University, Spain

Philipp Gütlich, Professor, Mainz University, Germany

Dragan Mihailovic, Professor, Ljubljana University, Slovenia

Jean-Pierre Sauvage, Professor, CNRS, Strasbourg University, France

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