

**ThromboGenics Awarded €3.2 Million Grant for the Development of its Anti-VPAC1 Antibody for Cancer Chemotherapy Induced Thrombocytopenia**

**Inhibition of VPAC1 could represent a novel strategy to increase the platelet count of cancer patients after chemotherapy**

**Leuven, Belgium – February 27, 2009** - ThromboGenics NV (Euronext Brussels: THR), a biotechnology company focused on innovative treatments for eye disease, vascular disease and cancer, announces that it has been awarded a grant of up to €3.2 million for the continued development of its Anti-VPAC1 (Vasoactive Intestinal Peptide/Pituitary Adenylyl Cyclase-Activating Peptide Receptor 1) antibody for the treatment of thrombocytopenia (low platelet count). The grant represents an important source of funding to support the development of this novel product which is expected to begin clinical trials in 2011.

The grant has come from the Institute for the promotion of Innovation by Science and Technology in Flanders (IWT) and is based on the successful completion of a series of development milestones over the next three years. IWT is a public institution which was created by the Flemish government to provide R&D and innovation support to projects based in Flanders.

Thrombocytopenia is a common, severe side-effect of chemotherapy used in cancer patients, when the number of platelets in the patient's blood is lower than normal. The patient is then at risk of bleeding and severe hemorrhage because their low platelet count prevents their blood from clotting normally. This is a significant clinical problem, as in some patients it can lead to the discontinuation of their cancer treatment. The current standard of care for chemotherapy-induced thrombocytopenia is a blood platelet transfusion; however, this only offers a temporary solution and is associated with further cost and risks. There is therefore a clear need for a product that is able to accelerate the patient's platelet production.

Research undertaken by ThromboGenics in conjunction with the University of Leuven has shown that the inhibition of VPAC1-mediated signalling could stimulate the production of platelets. The VPAC1 receptor is present at the surface of bone marrow cells called megakaryocytes, which, when mature, produce platelets. Recent findings published in the journal for the American Society of Hematology, *Blood*, has indicated that the inhibition of VPAC1 promotes megakaryocyte maturation and therefore could constitute a novel strategy to increase a patient's platelet count and functionality after chemotherapy treatment.<sup>1</sup>

**Dr. Patrik De Haes, CEO of ThromboGenics, commenting on this announcement said:** "We are pleased to have received this grant from the IWT which highlights the high quality scientific research that is the basis of ThromboGenics' success. The funds from this grant will assist us in continuing the development of Anti-VPAC1, our most advanced pre-clinical project. Results to-date suggest that the inhibition of VPAC1 could represent a major advance in treating thrombocytopenia experienced by cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. This would be a very significant improvement in their standard of care and could potentially lead to better treatment outcomes. I very much look forward to being able to report further results with this novel program as we work to move Anti-VPAC1 into the clinic."

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<sup>1</sup> "PACAP and its receptor VPAC1 regulate megakaryocyte maturation: therapeutic implications." Freson, Peeters, De Vos, Wittevrongel, Thys, Hoylaerts, Vermeylen and Van Geet, *Blood*, 111(4):1885-93 (2008)



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### **About ThromboGenics**

ThromboGenics is a biotechnology company focused on the discovery and development of biopharmaceuticals for the treatment of eye disease, vascular disease and cancer. The Company's lead product Microplasmin is in Phase III clinical development for the non-surgical treatment of back of the eye diseases. Microplasmin is also being evaluated in Phase II clinical development for additional vitreoretinal indications and as a potential therapy for stroke. ThromboGenics is also developing novel antibody therapeutics in collaboration with BioInvent International; these include TB-402 (Anti-Factor VIII), a long acting anti-coagulant, and TB-403 (anti-PIGF) for cancer.

ThromboGenics has built strong links with the University of Leuven and the Flanders Institute for Biotechnology (VIB) and has exclusive rights to certain therapeutics developed at these institutions. ThromboGenics is headquartered in Leuven, Belgium. The Company is listed on Eurolist by Euronext Brussels under the symbol THR. More information is available at [www.thrombogenics.com](http://www.thrombogenics.com).

### ***Important information about forward-looking statements***

*Certain statements in this press release may be considered "forward-looking". Such forward-looking statements are based on current expectations, and, accordingly, entail and are influenced by various risks and uncertainties. The Company therefore cannot provide any assurance that such forward-looking statements will materialize and does not assume an obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events or any other reason. Additional information concerning risks and uncertainties affecting the business and other factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from any forward-looking statement is contained in the Company's Annual Report.*