Strüngmann Award Honors Araris Biotech Founding Team as 2025 Winner

The expert jury selected Dragan Grabulovski, Ph.D., Philipp Spycher, Ph.D., and Isabella Attinger-Toller, Ph.D. of Araris Biotech, from a group of outstanding life science entrepreneurs

The founding team is developing a breakthrough technology to establish a new generation of targeted cancer therapies

Committee representatives presented the award and the EUR 100,000 cash prize on Thursday, July 3, 2025.

Munich, Germany, July 04, 2025

The Strüngmann Award selection committee today announced that Dragan Grabulovski, Ph.D., Philipp Spycher, Ph.D., and Isabella Attinger-Toller, Ph.D., the founders of Araris Biotech, have been honored as this year's winners. The award aims to support outstanding entrepreneurial and scientific achievements, as well as ground-breaking ideas in the life sciences industry. Araris Biotech's founding team distinguished itself not only by developing of a novel technology in the antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) field, but also by successfully validating this innovation through partnerships and a preclinical exit. This new drug class has the potential to significantly advance the development of targeted cancer therapies, thereby delivering added value for people living with cancer worldwide.

"On behalf of the award committee and this year's expert jury panel, we would like to congratulate Isabella Attinger-Toller, Dragan Grabulovski and Philipp Spycher. Together with the expert jury, we selected the founders of Araris Biotech as winners based on their combined leadership, entrepreneurial expertise and scientific excellence. Following the successful acquisition of Araris by Taiho Pharmaceuticals, we believe this award further recognizes the founding team's continued growth and positive trajectory ahead. This trio has impressively demonstrated how a new idea, a clear focus on translation and entrepreneurial boldness can come together to launch a new generation of targeted cancer therapies," said Andreas Strüngmann, M.D., and Thomas Strüngmann, Ph.D., in a joint statement. "It was a special privilege for us to engage with such a diverse, forward-looking group of start-ups from the DACH region. Learning more about the finalists and their impressive achievements made the final decision anything but easy."

The group of finalists selected in May comprised three companies: Araris Biotech, NovaGo Therapeutics and TOLREMO therapeutics, whose founders exemplify the entrepreneurial potential and scientific diversity that characterize the life sciences sector in the DACH region. They include an impressive variety of disciplines — spanning targeted cancer therapies, regenerative neuroscience and cancer drug resistance. Following the presentation of their entrepreneurial and scientific achievements to an expert jury, Dragan Grabulovski, Ph.D., Philipp Spycher, Ph.D., and Isabella Attinger-Toller, Ph.D., were announced today as the winning team and will receive a joint cash prize of EUR 100,000.

"We feel very honored to have our vision and achievements recognized by the Strüngmann Award. As the founding team, we have always believed in the potential of our new technology and the value it may hold for patients. This award, in addition to the acquisition by Taiho Pharmaceuticals, is a validation of our commitment, shared journey and the hard work that has enabled our success story," said Dragan Grabulovski, Ph.D., CEO of Araris Biotech, on behalf of the founding team.

The Araris Biotech founders, the experienced biotech entrepreneur Dragan Grabulovski, Ph.D., (CEO), the visionary scientist Philipp Spycher, Ph.D., (CSO) and the outstanding translational scientist Isabella Attinger-Toller, Ph.D., (CTO), can look back on one of the most successful Swiss biotech startups to be established in recent years. Spun out of the Paul Scherrer Institute (part of ETH domain) in 2019, the team developed a novel ADC linker-payload technology (AraLinQ™) that enables one-step payload attachment to off-the-shelf antibodies, without the need for prior antibody engineering. This innovative approach not only opens new possibilities in oncology, but also has potential for applications in other therapeutic areas.

In only a few years, the Araris team raised over CHF 40 million, formed a strategic partnership with Chugai (Roche) and Johnson & Johnson, and achieved a landmark acquisition by Taiho Pharmaceutical in March 2025 for up to USD $1.14 billion. Through these achievements, the three winners exemplify the potential within the DACH region to successfully translate scientific excellence into global innovation.

About the Strüngmann Award

The award was established in 2024 to recognize outstanding entrepreneurs realizing revolutionary ideas in the DACH life science sector. The goal is to reward exceptional achievements with a prestigious prize and to further the development of the next generation of leaders in this space. The award was named to honor twin brothers Andreas Strüngmann, M.D., and Thomas Strüngmann, Ph.D., who are among the important entrepreneurs, visionaries and investors in the life science sector. As the founders of Hexal, they achieved extraordinary entrepreneurial success and as investors, they have continued to repeat that success for more than 20 years by building and developing leading companies across the industry, including Mainz-based BioNTech.
Learn more at https://struengmannaward.de/.

About Araris Biotech AG

Araris Biotech is a leading biotech company pioneering the future of antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) and redefining the entire paradigm of targeted cancer therapy and beyond. Araris' vision is a world without chemotherapy and its proprietary conjugation and groundbreaking multi-payload technology represents a quantum leap forward in ADC design, enabling the transformation of any antibody into an ADC with the goal of better safety and efficacy. By enabling the attachment of multiple, synergistic cancer-fighting payloads to a single antibody in an efficient one-step process, Araris is creating a new generation of smart missiles that deliver the potency of combination chemotherapy in a targeted fashion in order to tackle the persistent challenges of cancer resistance. Araris is a wholly owned subsidiary of Taiho Pharmaceutical following its acquisition in March 2025.

For more information about our science and pipeline, please visit https://www.ararisbiotech.com/.

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