

Lecture Title:

Precision Chemistry applied to PROTACs

Speaker:

Dr Luc Van Hijfte (Symeres, The Netherlands)

Abstract: By adopting novel approaches to drug discovery, under the umbrella of “new modalities”, we breach the barriers of what used to be considered undruggable target space. One such highly novel and promising approach led to the development of the PROTACs, aiming at selectively degrading the proteins of therapeutic relevance. These larger, atypical entities often present quite some challenges in design and synthesis, both in the hit identification and optimization phase. Building on its cutting edge chemistry and medchem expertise, Symeres built a platform for the fast assembly of a diverse set of PROTACs, especially useful in the initial hit identification phase. The presentation will zoom into the synthetic and design challenges in this newly evolving field.



Dr Van Hijfte holds a PhD degree in Chemistry from Gent University (1984, Belgium) with Prof. M. Vandewalle, and finalized his academic training by a two-year post-doctoral stay at UCSB with Prof. RD. Little. He started his industrial career as a medicinal chemist at Merrell Dow in 1986 in Strasbourg, France, where he progressed to head of the medicinal chemistry by the time the site had become part of Sanofi in 1998. In 2002 he moved to Janssen, J&J, first as Research Director of their R&D site in Val de Reuil, France, before taking on the role of Senior Director, Head of Medicinal Chemistry EU, at Janssen Research & Development, with responsibility for European-based medicinal chemistry, analytical technologies, and ADMET. During this tenure, Luc was privileged to contribute to several successful projects, with numerous programs entering into clinical development in the areas of neurosciences, oncology, and infectious diseases. In 2012 Dr Van Hijfte became CSO of NovAliX, Illkirch, France, before moving in 2017 to his actual position of Sr VP Medicinal Chemistry at Symeres, where he oversees a team of approx. 80 chemists executing medicinal chemistry activities for clients worldwide.

Dr Van Hijfte has been the Vice-President of the French Medicinal Chemistry Society (SCT) in 2015-16, President of the SCT 2017-18, and is currently member of the Executive Committee of the EFMC. In 2018, he has been elected and named member of the “Académie Nationale de Pharmacie” in France, for his multiple contributions to pharmaceutical developments.