



## Eni Awards 2011 ceremony held at the Quirinale

Rome, 8 June 2011 – It was held, in the Salone delle Feste del Quirinale, the prize giving ceremony for the [Eni Awards 2011](#) took place in the presence of President Giorgio Napolitano, the Chairman of Eni Giuseppe Recchi and the CEO of Eni Paolo Scaroni. The award was established in 2007 and over the years has become an international reference point for research in the fields of energy and the environment. The Eni Award aims to encourage a better use of energy sources and develop new generations of researchers, reflecting Eni's commitment to scientific research and sustainability issues.

The [Scientific Commission](#) is composed of 24 Members including the two Nobel laureates Harold Kroto and Robert Richardson, university presidents, researchers and scientists coming from the most important study and research centres at worldwide level. On previous occasions researchers from 11 countries, including three Nobel Prize winners, have received prizes: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, United States of America. Over the years there have been thousands of world class researchers who have presented their research and been involved with the award. We must also recognise numerous people who have played a key role in sponsoring the researchers or have taken part in the various evaluation commissions.

The [prizewinners](#) of this edition have distinguished themselves in researching the new frontiers of hydrocarbons, renewable and non-conventional energy, environmental protection and the newcomer's award.

The **Prize for New Frontiers of Hydrocarbons** was assigned *equally* to [Gabor A. Somorjai](#), Professor of Chemistry at the University of California Berkeley and to [Martin Landrø](#), Professor of Applied Geophysics at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. Somorjai was awarded this prize for his research into the fundamental nature of homogeneous and heterogeneous catalysis and in particular for the development of

new catalysts used in petroleum cracking processes - key technology to ensure the yield and quality of fuels. Landro received the Eni Award for the development and application of 4D seismic analysis, a technique that helps determine the changes over time that occur to deposits of oil and gas, and therefore how to manage production development in order to significantly increase the amount of hydrocarbons that are retained. With his work, Martin Landro has contributed in a major way to the development of numerous projects carried out in oil producing areas of the North Sea.

The **Prize for Renewable and Unconventional Energy** was withdrawn to [Gregory Stephanopoulos](#), H. W Dow Professor of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), for his pioneering research in the emerging sector of Metabolic Engineering directed towards changing the gene structure of specific bacteria in order to render them more efficient in transforming renewable raw materials into hydrocarbons. This is a research topic of great interest as it relates to the production of second-generation biofuels, which are not in competition with the food sector.

[Jean-Marie Tarascon](#), Professor and Director of the Chemical Institute of the The Jules Verne University of Picardy received the "**Protection of the Environment**" Award for his activities carried out in the field of electric lithium ion batteries, creating safer devices at low cost and with reduced environmental impact that benefit from a new type of electrode designed specifically and based on organic materials. The availability of batteries with high performance and low cost represents a determining factor in the wide diffusion of electric vehicles in the transport sector with major environmental benefits.

The two **Newcomer Research Prizes**, reserved for researchers under 30, were awarded to [Simone Gamba](#), Department of Chemistry "G.Natta" at the Milan Polytechnic and to [Fabrizio Frontalini](#), researcher at the University of Urbino. During his PhD, Gamba developed an interest in the research into the interpretation and modelling of the *hydrocracking* process of hydrocarbons, while Frontalini contributed to research into the marine species *benthic foraminifera* as bio-indicators of traces of contaminants in marine environments. The study was applied to lake environments that were contaminated by industrial refuse which contain metals as microelements.

At the same time, Eni handed out annual Innovation Prizes to three research teams that have particularly distinguished themselves by the quality and level of innovation in their area of research. This year acknowledgments were given for research results in the field of advanced techniques in exploring hydrocarbons, in the formulation of fuels that are environmentally friendly ("Milan formula" petrol) and for the transformation and enhancement of organic waste as a raw material in the production of second generation biofuels.

On June 9, the winners will hold an event to talk about their research to the academic world. In particular, Gabor A. Somorjai, Martin Landro and Simone Gamba at 10.30 will be in Rome at the Convention Center Eni, Jean Marie Tarascon at 11.30 am will be at the University of Catania, while at 12 Gregory Stephanopoulos and Fabrizio Screen held their keynote at the University of Urbino. All the winners then will meet 10 days of the Castello del Valentino Turin for a talk show moderated by Gabriele Beccaria, in charge of Tuttoscienze, La Stampa, to explain their research, making knowledge available to everyone.

The Eni Award will not end in Turin. After the talk show has ended, thoughts will turn to the 2012 edition, for which new notices will be published tomorrow.

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