



Eni Award 2012 - The Award Ceremony at the Quirinale

Rome, 15 June 2012 – The award ceremony for the Eni Award 2012 was held today at the Quirinale, and attended by the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, the Chairman of Eni, Giuseppe Recchi and the CEO of Eni, Paolo Scaroni. Over the years, the award, first introduced in 2007, has become an international landmark for research into the energy and environmental fields. The Eni Award aims to develop better use of energy sources and to enhance new generations of researchers, testified by the critical importance Eni has given to scientific research and to sustainability issues. The Scientific Award Committee was made up of 24 members, including two Nobel Prize winners, Harold Kroto and Robert Richardson, university deans, researchers and scientists from the most important study and research centres in the world.

In past years, researchers from 14 countries won awards: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, United States, Canada, India and Australia. Among them are three Nobel Prize winners. Thousands of researchers from around the world have been involved and presented their research over the years, and thousands again have given their assistance or have been members of various assessment committees.

This year's award winners were distinguished by their research in fields at the new frontiers of hydrocarbons, renewable and non-conventional energy, environmental protection and made their debut in research.

Specifically, the "New Frontiers of Hydrocarbons" prize was awarded, for the upstream sector, to Fabio Rocca, Professor Emeritus of telecommunications at the Milan Polytechnic, and Alessandro Ferretti, CEO of Tele-Rilevamento Europa (TRE) - a spin-off of the Milan Polytechnic - for the development of a new processing algorithm for data obtained from satellite systems. When combined with other information gathered normally during the development of reservoirs, they can improve their exploitation by identifying the most promising areas for optimisation activity, enabling more hydrocarbons to be obtained, with the same number of wells, while safeguarding the environment.

For the downstream sector, the same award was assigned to Enrique Iglesia, Professor of Chemical Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, for the development of catalysts for hydrocarbon synthesis which can improve the efficiency of processes, and reduce waste and the amount of energy required. The result is better use of resources with less energy consumption and less impact on the environment for the entire process. One of the main subjects Iglesia is interested in is the reaction of the activation of methane and simple molecules derived from it to produce liquid products usable as raw materials for the production of fuels, lubricants and polymers starting not just from petroleum but also natural gas, biomasses and coal.

The "Renewable and Non-Conventional Energy" prize was awarded to Harry A. Atwater - Professor of Applied Physics and Material Science at the California Institute of Technology – and Albert Polman - Director and Scientific group leader at the FOM Institute AMOLF in Amsterdam – who, together, have created next generation, ultra-thin solar cells with greater efficiency and lower manufacturing costs, opening up new prospects for developing technologies based on solar energy.

Barbara Sherwood Lollar, who holds the Chair of Geology at the University of Toronto, won the "Environmental Protection" prize for developing techniques which, by monitoring the presence and quantity of stable isotopes of carbon in underground water are able to calculate the level of pollution and indicate the efficiency of on-site biodegradation performed by micro-organisms.

The two "Research Debut" prizes, reserved for researchers under 30, went to Silvia Comba and Jijeesh Ravi Nair, both of the Turin Polytechnic. Silvia Comba has developed a doctorate thesis on purification of contaminated water-bearing layers by using an innovative technique based on the use of nano and micro particles of iron. In his thesis, Jijeesh Ravi Nair has developed a methodology for preparing electrolytic membranes for lithium batteries capable of supplying electric power efficiently while protecting the environment.

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