

## **Topas Therapeutics Raises EUR 14 Million to Treat Immunological Disorders**

- Causal therapies based on novel approach for antigen-specific tolerance induction
- Significant opportunities through near term clinical proof-of-concept (“POC”)
- Strong strategic syndicate includes Epidarex Capital, EMBL Ventures, Gimv, and Evotec AG

*Hamburg, 22 March 2016.*

Topas Therapeutics GmbH (“Topas”), a Hamburg/Germany based company, today announced the closing of its Series A financing round. This investment provides the company with EUR 14 million (USD 15.75 million). The round was led by Epidarex Capital and includes EMBL Ventures, Gimv and Evotec AG. The proceeds enable Topas to expand and accelerate its proprietary tolerance induction platform and to progress with its product development to POC stage in multiple autoimmune and inflammatory indications including multiple sclerosis.

Topas is spun out from Evotec and is based on a licensed technology from the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (“UKE”) where it was invented by Dr Johannes Herkel and colleagues.

Topas’ unique platform is built on proprietary nanoparticles which selectively target liver sinusoidal endothelial cells (“LSECs”) and deliver peptides to such cells. LSECs are one of the body’s premier sites to induce tolerance against blood borne antigens by generating peptide-specific regulatory T cells; this natural pathway is utilized by the Topas technology and applied to treat autoimmune diseases, allergies and drug induced immune reaction where the antigen and its respective antigenic peptides are known. Pre-clinical development for multiple sclerosis is underway and Phase I studies in MS are expected to commence in 2017.

The investors supporting Topas have extensive experience in leveraging platform technologies to develop and commercialize multi-product opportunities. Eli Lilly and Company is one of several investors in Epidarex Capital and as such is committed to creating new research and development models to sustain the flow of novel medicines and innovation to patients around the world.

**Timm Jessen, CEO of Topas Therapeutics**, said: “We are thrilled to have gathered such an experienced and strong consortium to prove this unique approach successful in the clinics – that is our clear goal. Evotec has been of tremendous help to prepare for this endeavour, and we are delighted to see them joining the financing round as well.”

**Werner Lanthaler, CEO of Evotec and interim Supervisory Board Chairman of Topas Therapeutics**, added: “Topas has the potential for ground-breaking products in the area of tolerance induction and will bring this approach to clinical execution with its great team. This company formation gives Evotec and its shareholders an optimal risk-reward leverage in the field of immunological disorders.”

**Peter Finan PhD, Partner at Epidarex Capital** commented: “Topas Therapeutics’ unique approach to tolerance has the potential to lead to transformative medicines in diseases of high unmet medical need. We are delighted to have led the financing with such strong co-investors and we look forward to working closely with the Topas team to realise this potential.”

**Dr Karl Nägler, Partner Gimv Health & Care** commented: “Antigen specific immune tolerance approaches have recently gained increasing momentum with investors and corporates. We are excited to add Topas with its best-in-class technology and outstanding management team to our life sciences portfolio.”

**M Johnston Erwin, VP Corporate Business Development, Eli Lilly and Company** commented:” Topas’ approach has the potential to provide new treatment options on multiple layers for patients with devastating autoimmune and inflammatory disorders.”

## **About Topas Therapeutics GmbH**

Topas is an early stage therapeutics company using ground breaking nanoparticle technology to target autoimmune and inflammatory diseases via the induction of antigen specific immune tolerance in the liver. The platform has been exclusively licensed from the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (“UKE”) where it was invented by Johannes Herkel, Jörg Heeren and other colleagues in Hamburg. It is anticipated that Topas will advance their initial program targeting multiple sclerosis into clinical development in 2017.

## **About Epidarex Capital**

Epidarex Capital invests in early-stage, high growth life science and health technology companies in under-ventured markets within the UK and US. Epidarex was created to meet the need for more sector-specific risk capital for young companies, including spin-outs from leading research universities. The fund’s international management team has a track record of successfully partnering with top scientists and entrepreneurs to develop highly innovative products for the global healthcare market. For further information please visit [www.epidarex.com](http://www.epidarex.com)

## **About EMBL Ventures**

EMBL Ventures is an independent venture capital investor that manages two Funds with a total of €8 million capital on behalf of major European institutional and private investors. EMBL Ventures’ close relationship with the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and its technology transfer organization, EMBL Enterprise Management Technology Transfer GmbH (EMBLEM), allows it to finance disruptive technologies in an entrepreneurial start-up environment, aiming ultimately for a transaction with a partner that is seeking to acquire external product innovation. EMBL Ventures is exclusively focused on life-science investments. For further information please visit [www.embl-ventures.com](http://www.embl-ventures.com)

## **About Gimv**

Gimv is a European investment company with over three decades experience in private equity and venture capital. The company is listed on Euronext Brussels. Gimv currently manages around 1.8 billion EUR (including co-investment partnerships) of investments in about 50 portfolio companies. As a recognized market leader in selected investment platforms, Gimv identifies entrepreneurial and innovative companies with high-growth potential and supports them in their transformation into market leaders. Gimv's four investment platforms are: Connected Consumer, Health & Care, Smart Industries and Sustainable Cities. Each of these platforms works with a skilled and dedicated team across Gimv's home markets of the Benelux, France and Germany and can count on an extended international network of experts. More information on Gimv can be found on [www.gimv.com](http://www.gimv.com)

## **About Evotec**

Evotec is a drug discovery alliance and development partnership company focused on rapidly progressing innovative product approaches with leading pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, academics, patient advocacy groups and venture capitalists. We operate worldwide providing the highest quality stand-alone and integrated drug discovery solutions, covering all activities from target-to-clinic. The Company has established a unique position by assembling top-class scientific experts and integrating state-of-the-art technologies as well as substantial experience and expertise in key therapeutic areas including neuroscience, pain, metabolic diseases as well as oncology, inflammation and infectious diseases. Evotec has long-term discovery alliances with partners including Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, CHDI, Genentech, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, MedImmune/AstraZeneca, Roche and UCB. In addition, the Company has existing development partnerships and product candidates both in clinical and pre-clinical development. These include partnerships with Boehringer Ingelheim and MedImmune in the field of diabetes, with Janssen Pharmaceuticals in the field of depression and with Roche in the field of Alzheimer's disease. For additional information please go to [www.evotec.com](http://www.evotec.com).

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