

PRESS RELEASE

Hertie Foundation and FENS award Eric Kandel Young Neuroscientists Prize to Marta Zlatic

Frankfurt, 13 March 2017 - **The Hertie Foundation and the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) have announced the winner of their prize for young neuroscientists: Marta Zlatic, a Croatian/British neurobiologist, will receive the Eric Kandel Young Neuroscientists Prize worth EUR 100,000 for her research into decision-making processes in the brain.**

It is the fifth time that the Hertie Foundation and FENS have awarded the prize, which recognises the work of outstanding young scientists and gives them the means to advance their careers as researchers.

Dr Marta Zlatic conducts research at Janelia Research Campus, part of the prestigious Howard Hughes Medical Institute in the USA, and at Cambridge University in the UK. The prize is for her contribution to the understanding of the neural mechanisms underlying decision-making in the brains of animals. All living creatures are constantly making decisions and the nervous system controls behaviours that are essential for survival, such as flight or fight. Zlatic researches the bias towards various behaviours, the choice of one particular behaviour and the subsequent assessment of its success.

Together with her research group, Marta Zlatic discovered circuit mechanisms of competitive interactions between neurons in the nervous system of *Drosophila* larvae, which promote certain behaviours and suppress others. She also discovered processes that the nervous system uses to combine various sensory inputs in order to learn lessons for future decision-making.

The outstanding feature of Marta Zlatic's work was the combination of a number of different cutting-edge methods. The brain of the fruit fly larva is less complex than mammal brains, which makes it easier to map. Since basic neural processes in the brains of insects and humans are similar, her studies pave the way for further research on the human brain.

The prize money attached to the Eric Kandel Young Neuroscientists Prize comes in two parts: EUR 50,000 for the winner's personal use, and up to EUR 50,000 for developing a scientific cooperation arrangement. By working with an internationally recognised neuroscientist, the winner will be able to advance her career in research. The prize is offered in collaboration with the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) and is named after American Nobel Prize winner Prof. Eric Kandel, one of the most famous living neuroscientists. Eric Kandel, who works at Columbia University in New York, will present the prize in person at a ceremony on 6 June in Frankfurt. The award falls under the patronage of the German Minister for Education and Research, Prof. Johanna Wanka.

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The Hertie Foundation is one of the largest foundations in Germany not connected to a company or ideology. It was set up in 1974 by the heirs of department store owner Georg Karg. The foundation's associates and assets are dedicated to the fields of neuroscience, social innovation and education. www.ghst.de