

## Maurizio Prato foreign academician of the Royal Academy of Sciences

At a ceremony held yesterday, Maurizio Prato, Ikerbasque professor and AXA professor of CIC biomaGUNE, was admitted to the RAC as a foreign academician

Professor Prato delivered his acceptance speech entitled “Synergies between Chemistry and Nanotechnology: possible solutions to impossible challenges” during the ceremony

**Donostia-San Sebastian. 17 November, 2022.** The [Ikerbasque](#) professor and [AXA](#) chair of CIC biomaGUNE Maurizio Prato has been appointed foreign academician by the Royal Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Spain (RAC). Right now, Professor Prato is the senior researcher of CIC biomaGUNE’s [Carbon Bionanotechnology](#) group and of the Carbon Nanotechnology group of the University of Trieste (Italy).

In a public scientific session in which the professor delivered a lecture entitled “Synergies between Chemistry and Nanotechnology: possible solutions to impossible challenges,” the RAC presented Professor Prato with a diploma accrediting him as a member of the society. The session was held at the headquarters of the Royal Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences of Spain in Madrid.

The RAC is one of the most established and prestigious scientific institutions in Spain. Although in its current form it was founded in 1847, its origins date back to 1582. Its main mission is to promote the study of and research into the Mathematical, Physical, Chemical, Geological and Biological Sciences and their applications, as well as to spread their knowledge, and it currently endeavors to cover all the scientific disciplines that are being created and evolving over time.

Prato is grateful for his new nomination: “It is a huge honor for me. Being part of an institution as important as the RAC means belonging to an elite of the best scientists in Europe and the world.” The professor said that it is not easy to be admitted to an academy of sciences, and that this nomination is a recognition of his scientific career. “I particularly appreciate the opportunity to join the RAC, because this country is my second home, and it is where I work part of my time. This event strengthens my bonds with my Spanish friends and colleagues, making my stay here even more enjoyable,” he added.

In his lecture, the new RAC foreign academician highlighted some of the challenges that he tries to tackle daily from his laboratory, and stressed the need for “a multidisciplinary approach in which collaboration between different fields brings the solution closer and puts it within our reach”. Two of the fields in which Professor Prato is currently working are completely different from each other: one is the quest for alternative energy sources “that can be developed in a clean way without producing toxic by-products during their use”; the other is related to “spinal cord injury repair”. In the quest for new solutions to these difficult problems, “the synergy between

Chemistry and Nanotechnologies offers incredible possibilities. In my laboratory, we have proposed a revolutionary approach to spinal cord injury therapy. What is more, we are actively seeking novel ways of using sunlight to produce the energy needed to power a rapidly growing world”, said Prato.

### **About Maurizio Prato**

A researcher since 1983 in the Department of Organic Chemistry of the University of Padua, [Maurizio Prato](#) was appointed associate lecturer in Organic Chemistry at the Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Trieste in 1992, becoming a tenured lecturer in February 2000. Since 2015 he has been an Ikerbasque Research Professor and an AXA Research Professor at the CIC biomaGUNE cooperative research center. He received two prestigious ERC (European Research Council) grants in 2008 and 2020.

In addition, he was appointed a member of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in 2010, of the European Academy of Sciences in 2013, of the European Academy in 2015 and of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in 2018. In 2013 he was appointed honorary professor of the Jiao Tong University in Xi'an (China). He has done research at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, USA (1980); at University College Dublin, Ireland (1983); at the University of Yale, (1986-87); and at the University of California, Santa Barbara, (1991-92). He was visiting professor in the Departments of Chemistry at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris in 2001, at the University of Namur (Belgium) in 2010, at the University of Strasbourg in 2014, and at the University of Mons (Belgium) in 2018 within the framework of a Francqui Chair. The University of Salento has recently conferred on him an honorary degree in "Medical Biotechnology and Nanobiotechnology". In 2021 Maurizio Prato was also accorded the NAI Fellow distinction by the National Academy of Inventors (NAI) for his contributions toward the advancement of science in various fields.

### **About CIC biomaGUNE**

The Center for Cooperative Research in Biomaterials CIC biomaGUNE, member of the Basque Research and Technology Alliance ([BRTA](#)), conducts state-of-the-art research at the interface between Chemistry, Biology and Physics, devoting particular attention to studying the properties of biological nanostructures on a molecular scale and their biomedical applications. It was recognized in 2018 as a “María de Maeztu” Unit of Excellence for meeting requirements of excellence, which are characterized by a high impact and level of competitiveness in its field of activity on the global scientific stage.