



## PRESS RELEASE

### **ONCURIOUS I-O Portfolio Directed at Boosting T Cell Influx and Activity in Solid Tumors**

#### **Announcing First Preclinical Proof of Concept in Proprietary CCR8 Treg Program**

- *Strategic focus of immuno-oncology (I-O) portfolio on modulation of tumor microenvironment to enhance T cell influx and activity in immune excluded solid tumors, aspects that immune checkpoint inhibitors do not address.*
- *Preclinical Proof of Concept for Company's priority I-O program, aiming at depleting regulatory T cells (Tregs) by targeting C-C motif chemokine receptor 8 (CCR8)*
- *Initiating lead optimization phase in proprietary CCR8 Treg Program.*
- *Preclinical development of therapeutic antibody program expected to start in early 2021.*

**Leuven, Belgium - October 22, 2020 - 6.45 PM CET**, ONCURIOUS NV, a Belgium-based biotech company focused on developing innovative immune-oncology treatments, today presents its strategy directed at boosting T cell migration, infiltration and activity into solid tumors, and announces that it has reached preclinical proof of concept and has entered the lead optimization phase with its proprietary CCR8 Treg program.

This important milestone follows Oncurious' decision to focus its development activities on a pipeline of promising novel immune-oncology targets and drug discovery projects.

Oncurious scientists, in collaboration with world-class immuno-oncology experts in T cell and endothelial cell biology – Prof. Dr. Gabriele Bergers (VIB-KU Leuven), Prof. Dr. Massimiliano Mazzone (VIB-KU Leuven) and Prof. Dr. Jo Van Ginderachter (VIB-VUB), and the drug discovery unit at VIB, are building a pipeline of proprietary investigational I-O therapies with distinct mode of actions.

The team has discovered a potent and diverse panel of leads targeting human CCR8, has reached preclinical proof of concept and is entering the final lead optimization stages nearing preclinical candidate selection. Oncurious is now accelerating its efforts towards initiation of preclinical development of the therapeutic antibody program in early 2021.

CCR8 has been validated to be a tumor-infiltrating Treg-specific marker in solid tumors in both patients and animal models, making it the preferred target for therapeutic depletion of Tregs in cancer.

Oncurious' CCR8 leads have been generated using an antibody technology platform that has been validated and used for more than a decade to generate high quality binders against G-protein coupled receptors. Molecules discovered using this technology were tested in several preclinical tumor models, and showed that targeting CCR8, depleted Tregs specifically in the tumor microenvironment and resulted in strong anti-tumor responses in monotherapy as well as in combination with anti-PD1. The treatments led to the establishment of immunological memory.

Next to the anti-CCR8 program, Oncurious is focusing on 2 other programs aimed at boosting anti-tumor T cell influx and activity in immune excluded tumors. Exclusion of T cells is an immunosuppressive mechanism commonly used by cancers to evade the immune system and as such is an attractive target for new therapeutic modalities.

The company expects to make further announcements regarding its progress in the near future.



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**Patrik De Haes, M.D., Executive Chairman of ONCURIOUS NV** comments, *"I am excited about the future of Oncurious based on its portfolio of novel, differentiated I-O therapies. The company's approach is to generate novel drug candidates to treat immune excluded solid tumors that are not adequately addressed by immune checkpoint inhibitors, which are rapidly becoming the mainstay of cancer therapy. Today we are announcing significant progress in both hit and lead generation against novel I-O targets, including CCR8, which we believe could play a key role in the development of innovative immunotherapies to overcome solid tumor resistance. Working with leading scientists in the field, we aim to be at the forefront of a new wave of the I-O revolution and are confident that by delivering on our goals we can build Oncurious into a company of significant value in the years ahead. We look forward to updating you on our further progress."*

**Jérôme Van Biervliet, Managing Director at VIB** comments: *"We are very pleased to see Oncurious' anti-CCR8 antibody reach this important step towards preclinical development, not least thanks to the model collaboration with VIB Discovery Sciences. Side-by-side with the Oncurious team, they are accelerating a promising pipeline of investigational immuno-oncology therapies."*

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**For further information please contact:**

<u>Oncurious NV</u> Wouter Piepers, Investor Relations & Corporate Communications Tel: +32 478 33 56 32 <a href="mailto:wouter.piepers@oncurious.com">wouter.piepers@oncurious.com</a>	<u>VIB</u> Elisabeth Stes External Relations Manager +32 9 244 66 11 / +32 486 82 59 02 <a href="mailto:elisabeth.stes@vib.be">elisabeth.stes@vib.be</a>	<u>Citigate Dewe Rogerson</u> David Dible/ Sylvie Berrebi/Frazer Hall Tel: +44 20 7638 9571 <a href="mailto:oncurious@citigatedewerogerson.com">oncurious@citigatedewerogerson.com</a>
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### About ONCURIOUS

Oncurious is a Belgium-based biotech company focused on developing innovative oncology treatments derived from a series of promising new targets that are designed to enhance T cell activity, migration and influx into resistant tumour sites, boosting the patient's own immune response against cancer. The company's lead immuno oncology asset is a Treg-depleting asset, targeting a protein specifically expressed on Tregs in the tumour microenvironment. The program is in lead optimization. The company's two other programs are focused on T cell migration and are in the discovery stages.

Immuno-oncology made a major step forward in the treatment of cancer with the advent of immune checkpoint inhibitors, which are expected to represent a market opportunity of \$50bn by 2025 (GlobalData 2020). Despite this clinical and commercial success, there remains an important need to develop new I-O approaches that improve efficacy, overcome resistance, and that can synergize with checkpoint inhibitors so that more patients with solid tumors can benefit from these life-saving therapies.



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Oncurious' early stage pipeline of novel immune-oncology programs offer the potential to overcome tumor resistance mechanisms, that current immune checkpoint inhibitors cannot address, and thereby significantly enhance the responses to immunotherapy across multiple tumor types.

More information: [www.oncurious.com](http://www.oncurious.com)

### **About VIB**

VIB is an excellence-based entrepreneurial research institute in life sciences located in Flanders, Belgium. VIB's basic research leads to new and innovative insights into normal and pathological life processes. It unites the expertise of all its collaborators and research groups in a single institute, firmly based on its close partnership with 5 Flemish universities (Ghent University, KU Leuven, University of Antwerp, Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Hasselt University) and supported by a solid funding program from the Flemish government.

VIB has an excellent track record on translating basic scientific results into pharmaceutical, agricultural and industrial applications. Since its foundation in 1996, VIB has created 25 start-up companies, now employing over 900 people. The link between basic research and valorisation has made VIB a catalyst for the ever-growing biotech hotspot in Flanders. In recent years, numerous biotech companies — both large and small — have settled down in the region, thanks to top-notch infrastructure set up and provided by VIB and the ready availability of new scientific talent from the VIB labs.

More information: [www.vib.be](http://www.vib.be)