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Therachon Appoints Luca Santarelli, M.D., as Chief Executive Officer and Extends Series A Financing

Basel, Switzerland – Jan. 5, 2017 – Therachon AG, a biotechnology company focused on rare genetic diseases, today announced it has appointed Luca Santarelli, M.D., as Chief Executive Officer and Director, and raised $5 million in the final close of its Series A financing. The Series A now stands at $40 million and includes founding investors Versant Ventures and Inserm Transfer Initiative (ITI), existing investor OrbiMed and new investor Banque publique d'investissement (Bpifrance).

Proceeds from this financing will be used to advance the company's emerging portfolio, including its lead program in achondroplasia, the most common form of short-limbed dwarfism. In connection with the financing, Bpifrance's Chahra Louafi has joined the company's Board of Directors.

"I'm pleased to welcome Luca as CEO of Therachon," said Chairman Tom Woiwode, Ph.D., Managing Director at Versant. "His deep industry experience will help Therachon develop its portfolio and accelerate its leading program into the clinic. I'm also thrilled to welcome Chahra to the board. I know she'll make important contributions, as she has on previous boards where we've had the opportunity to work together."

"I am excited to join Therachon and look forward to continuing to build a world-class pipeline and partnering with the achondroplasia community to develop a truly transformative therapeutic option," said Dr. Santarelli. "Our lead pipeline candidate TA-46 has demonstrated exceptional preclinical efficacy and holds the promise of fully restoring normal growth and mitigating some of the devastating complications in children suffering from achondroplasia".

Dr. Santarelli brings over 20 years of experience in academic, industrial research and development, and business experience from his role as Venture Partner at Versant Ventures. In addition to his training as both a discovery scientist and clinician, Dr. Santarelli has deep operating experience from his progressive leadership responsibilities at Roche, most recently serving as Senior Vice President and Global Head of Neuroscience, Ophthalmology and Rare Diseases. In this capacity, he built a multi-disciplinary team and led efforts spanning from drug discovery to early development. Luca also provided strategic and operational leadership for many of the Roche external biotech collaborations and helped instill a more entrepreneurial culture in the broader R&D organization. Luca received his medical and scientific training at the University of Turin (Italy) and post-doctorate training at Columbia University (USA), where he also co-founded a venture-backed start-up while on faculty.

“Therachon has positioned itself as a leader in developing transformative medicines to give new hope to people living with rare genetic diseases,” said Ms. Louafi. “I look forward to working with Luca and the rest of the team in moving both Therachon and TA-46 forward.”

Ms. Louafi is Senior Investment Director and Head of the Biotherapies and Rare Diseases Fund of Bpifrance. She is Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Inserm Transfert Initiative, a member of the Supervisory Board of Cap Decisif Management, as well as a board member of several public and private biotechnology companies. Ms. Louafi holds a M.A. in technology and innovation management from Paris Dauphine University, a M.A. in corporate finance from Paris X Nanterre University and a MSc in microbiology and enzymatic engineering from Institut National Agronomique Paris-Grignon. She recently was awarded the title of Chevalier de l’Ordre National du Mérite (Knight in the National Order of Merit) for her public service and contributions to the French biotech sector.

About Therachon

Therachon is a global biotechnology company focused on developing treatments for rare, genetic diseases that currently have no available treatments. The company’s lead pipeline candidate, TA-46, is a novel protein therapy in development for achondroplasia, the most common form of short-limbed dwarfism. This rare genetic condition affects about one in 25,000 children and is caused by a genetic mutation of the FGFR3 receptor, which stunts child bone growth. Therachon is committed to translating the promise of its science into new treatments for patients with high unmet medical needs. For more information, visit www.therachon.com.

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