



Ghent,  
Belgium

# SHORT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

## HOST INFORMATION

Full name and  
Grade of host:

**Bart P LEROY, MD, PhD**

Profession & specialty:

Professor of Ophthalmology & Ophthalmic Genetics,  
Certified Ophthalmologist & Clinical Geneticist

HCP name:

Ghent University Hospital, Belgium

Department:

Department of Ophthalmology & Center for Medical Genetics Ghent

Type:

Clinical unit

Rare Eye Diseases  
covered:

Retinal RED

Paediatric RED

## INTENDED PARTICIPANTS - TRAINEES

Function of intended  
participants:

Medical doctor

Genetic Counsellors

Orthoptists

Level of expected  
trainees:

Medical specialists

## OBJECTIVES OF THE EXCHANGE

Objectives:

Knowledge sharing between medical network members

Main RED activities:

The combination of the Department of Ophthalmology & the Center for Medical Genetics at Ghent University Hospital (HCP Ghent University Hospital) in Ghent, BELGIUM is a top center specialised in ophthalmic genetics, clinical ophthalmology of all rare eye diseases, visual electrophysiology and molecular genetics.

Prof Bart P LEROY, MD, PhD is Head of the Department of Ophthalmology, and also leads the clinical part of the ophthalmic genetics program. Other medical doctors who are involved in ophthalmic genetics, medical retina and paediatric ophthalmology include Julie DE ZAEYTIJD, MD and Sophie WALRAEDT, MD. In addition, Caroline VAN CAUWENBERGH, PhD is a molecular geneticist and researcher who is the Clinical Trial Coordinator for our gene therapy trials. Leen HERTENS, MSc is a biomedical scientist who is the second Research Coordinator.

Prof Elfride DE BAERE, MD, PhD is Head of the Molecular Genetics Laboratory at the Center for Medical Genetics and leads the molecular part of the ophthalmic genetics program. She has several Postdoctoral Fellows in her lab, including Frauke COPPIETERS, PhD and Miriam BAUWENS, PhD.

Multiple PhD students help to achieve an ambitious research program, on top of the clinical, molecular service for RED at the national Belgian level.

The ophthalmic genetics program at HCP Ghent University Hospital is World-class, and provides insight into and training in clinical management, extensive imaging techniques and visual electrophysiology and psychophysics as well as molecular genetics of all genetic eye diseases. This comprises both isolated ocular or retinal disease, as well as syndromic conditions.

We are currently participating in a number of gene therapy trials for different REDs, including CEP290-related Leber Congenital Amaurosis and Leber Hereditary Optic Neuropathy.

The molecular genetics lab is the national reference lab for REDs.

Bart P LEROY is the co-lead of the WG1 on Rare Retinal Disease of ERN-EYE, and Elfride DE BAERE is the second representative of HCP Ghent University Hospital in ERN-EYE.

### Expected benefits for the trainees:

A clinical training will entail hands-on experience seeing both adult patients and children with an inherited eye disease, with a resident and a clinical supervisor. The clinical training would be in the form of an observership, which would mean that you do not see patients on your own. Most of our patients are seen in either Flemish Dutch or French, albeit that some patients are addressed in English. The candidate will be able to observe and discuss clinical cases of the patients, including the results of psychophysical and electrophysiological evaluations, as well as how to ask for, and interpret results of molecular genetic tests in a clinical setting.

Furthermore, the candidate will learn principles and practice of genetic counseling with regard to rare eye disorders.

Principles of gene therapy strategies, stem cells and bionic eyes will also feature heavily.

In addition, we provide the opportunity to observe the functioning of a fully equipped and state-of-the-art molecular genetics laboratory. This includes whole genome and exome sequencing, Sanger sequencing and techniques to detect copy number variations.

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### I volunteer to welcome a trainee in my hospital:

Yes, two at a time



### For you, what is the ideal duration of the exchange:

Two weeks (two 5-day packages)



### Preferred Edition to host:

**Edition n°1** (March 2021 - August 2021)



**Edition n°2** (Sept. 2021 - February 2022)



**Edition n°3** (March 2022 - Sept. 2022)



## ..... ORGANISATION OF THE EXCHANGES