Press release

Prof. Dr. Rik W. De Doncker receives the ERNST BLICKLE AWARD 2025

SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation presents the ERNST BLICKLE AWARD, worth 100,000 euros, to the Director of ISEA (RWTH Aachen)

Bruchsal, 08.05.2026 – On May 8, 2026, Prof. Dr. Rik W. De Doncker was awarded the 2025 ERNST BLICKLE PRIZE. Presented every two years by the SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation, the prize is endowed with 100,000 euros, making it one of the most prestigious awards worldwide. Prof. De Doncker is the director of the Institute for Power Electronics and Electric Drives (ISEA) at RWTH Aachen University. Alongside him, 15 selected university and college graduates received the SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation's Student Award during a joint ceremony. The Student Award is endowed with 2,500 euros each and is awarded annually for outstanding bachelor's and master's theses.

Prof. De Doncker is receiving this prestigious award from the SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation for his groundbreaking scientific contributions to the design of an efficient, flexible, and integrated electrical power grid, as well as low-loss, highly compact power electronic converters. In addition, the honor also recognizes his initiative to bridge the gap between basic academic research and industrial application through the E.ON Energy Research Center at RWTH Aachen University and the research campus Flexible Electrical Networks (FEN).

Born in Belgium, Prof. De Doncker is a renowned electrical engineer and university professor. At RWTH Aachen University, he heads a world-leading research center on Flexible Electrical Networks (FEN), a consortium of 15 RWTH institutes and 25 industry partners from Europe, Japan, and South Korea) and the Center for the Analysis of Aging, Reliability, and Lifespan Prediction of Electrochemical and Power Electronic Systems (CARL), both of which stem from his research and initiative.

His current research and development activities focus on high-performance DC transformers and DC transformers. In addition, he has focused his research on grid-connected medium-voltage inverters, powertrains, and battery chargers for electric vehicles, as well as electronic power transformers with the highest power density.

Prof. De Doncker has received numerous international awards for his outstanding scientific achievements. Among other honors, he has been awarded the IEEE Medal in Power Engineering and the IEEE Newell Power Electronics Field Award – the highest honors in their respective

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ERNST BLICKLE AWARD 2025
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categories. Furthermore, he is a long-standing member of the German Academy of Science and Engineering (ACATECH) and was inducted last year as an international member into the U.S. National Academy of Engineering (NAE). Many engineers consider this to be one of the highest honors of all.

"Visionary, doer, leader, researcher, and teacher"
In his laudatory speech, Prof. Johann Kolar, a member of the board of the SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation, reviewed the remarkable career and societal significance of the research work carried out by this exceptional scientist, pioneer, and innovator: "With great dedication, Prof. De Doncker has made fundamental contributions to the development of power electronics systems for the generation, transmission, distribution, and use of electrical energy." Among his patents is the so-called "Dual Active Bridge Converter" (DABC). He invented this device in the late 1980s during his time "as the youngest visiting associate professor" at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

"In the next step, Prof. De Doncker moved from academia to industry, becoming a senior scientist at the General Electric R&D Center in Schenectady, New York," reports Prof. Kolar. "There, he patented a power electronics interface for battery storage systems, which would go on to play a fundamental role in hybrid vehicles." Prof. Kolar honors the award recipient as "a visionary, a doer, a leader, a highly respected researcher, a dedicated teacher, and a beloved colleague." As an author or co-author, he has over 1,000 publications in leading journals and conference proceedings to his credit and has written or co-authored four books. Particularly in his role as a university professor, he has passionately inspired many young people to pursue electrical engineering, supporting, guiding, and inspiring them throughout their educational journey. He currently supervises over 30 doctoral students.

In his acceptance speech, following the presentation of the award by Jürgen Blickle, Chairman of the SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation and Managing Partner of SEW-EURODRIVE, Prof. De Doncker expressed his honor at receiving this "highly sought-after and prestigious award." He still even knows some of the ERNST BLICKLE Award winners from previous years personally. Prof. De Doncker intends to allocate his prize money to further research projects.

Fifteen young scientists receive prestigious Student Award
Dr.-Ing. Anette Weisbecker, a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors, then turned her attention to the 15 university and college graduates who were also honored by the SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation at the joint ceremony. The young scientists from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland received the 2,500-euro academic award in recognition of their outstanding academic achievements and theses.

About the SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation
The SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation was established on November 30, 1989, by Edeltraut Blickle, the mother of CEO Jürgen Blickle, in memory of her husband Ernst Blickle, who passed away in July 1986. Every two years, the foundation presents the ERNST BLICKLE AWARD to honor a distinguished figure in research and business for their scientific achievements and entrepreneurial commitment to progress and the well-being of society. The SEW-EURODRIVE Foundation sees itself as a bridge between independent research, economic efficiency, and social and environmental responsibility.

About SEW-EURODRIVE
Founded in 1931, SEW EURODRIVE GmbH & Co KG is a family business headquartered in Bruchsal, near Karlsruhe, in the Baden-Württemberg region of Germany. Today, SEW

EURODRIVE is one of the world's leading specialists in drive and automation technology, with more than 22 700 employees, 18 production plants, and 92 assembly plants in 57 countries.

As a market leader in its field, SEW EURODRIVE keeps applications, processes, systems, and machinery moving in countless sectors – from airport logistics to industrial processes. With around 800 employees working in research and development, the company is making an innovative contribution to shaping the future of drive technology.

Proximity to customers is one of SEW-EURODRIVE's top priorities. An extensive sales and service network provides professional advice on site and ensures the rapid availability of spare parts and repairs – anywhere in the world. Alongside its headquarters and production facilities in Bruchsal and its plant in Graben-Neudorf, the company operates 30 other sites across Germany.