

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First surgeries ever in Europe with a totally implantable cochlear implant

Innsbruck, 19 October 2020: Leading hearing implant manufacturer MED-EL sets another revolutionary milestone in its long-standing history of technological innovations. On 24 September, the first person in Europe received a novel totally implantable cochlear implant (TICI). It was implanted by Prof. Dr. Philippe Lefebvre, head of the ENT Department of the CHU of Liège and Professor at the University of Liège in Belgium within a feasibility study. The TICI is expected to give users great hearing with even more comfort. However, it will take several years before it receives market approval. A young man with close to profound hearing loss was the first person in Europe to receive a fully implantable cochlear implant.



Cochlear Implant System with two main components: the externally worn audio processor and the internal implant

Cochlear implant (CI) systems, which bypass the non-functioning part of the ear and stimulate the hearing nerve electrically, have long been a standard treatment for individuals with severe to profound hearing loss. They currently consist of an internal implant which is surgically placed underneath the skin, and an audio processor which is worn externally, behind or off the ear. The audio processor contains the microphone required to pick up sound as well as the power supply.

"Our cochlear implants have helped hundreds of thousands of people around the world to hear and have improved their quality of life. Many users have expressed the wish for a CI that works without an external component on or off the ear, is invisible and operates even when users are asleep", says Dr. Ingeborg Hochmair, founder and CEO of MED-EL.

Totally implantable cochlear implants will be the most innovative and sophisticated technology in the field of hearing solutions. The TICI contains all the internal and external components of a cochlear implant system in one device placed underneath the skin, including the audio processor, microphone and power supply.

"It is our mission to overcome hearing loss as a barrier to communication and quality of life. For decades, our research and development has been based on close interdisciplinary collaboration with clinics and university departments. These collaborations allow us to continuously advance technology

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and solutions for people with a hearing loss. Developing a totally implantable device has been in the focus of MED-EL's research for many years. I am very proud of our dedicated team of experts who have worked with creativity and diligence to develop this unique device within well over a decade.", Dr. Hochmair explains.

With the first TICI implantation, MED-EL has confirmed once again their position as the leader in the hearing implant field. The global company headquartered in Innsbruck is renowned for their strong focus on Research & Development as well as for constantly pushing technological boundaries forward for the benefit of their users.



Prof. Dr. Philippe Lefebvre,
head of the ENT Department
of the CHU of Liège and
Professor at the University of
Liège in Belgium

Prof. Dr. Philippe Lefebvre, head of the ENT Department at the University Hospital of Liège and Professor at the University of Liège in Belgium performed Europe's first in man TICI surgery. He is a leading expert in auditory implantology with broad expertise in implantable microphone technology. *"We tested the implant after surgery and are thrilled that everything is working as expected. Modern cochlear implant technology has been evolving at an impressive pace, delivering outstanding hearing results. The TICI is a milestone within the field of cochlear implantation. It has been a wish from the early days of cochlear implantation to be able to integrate all components within an internal device."*, the ENT doctor points out. Several more surgeries with the totally implantable cochlear implant will follow in Liège and Munich in the next couple of months as part of the clinical feasibility study.

About MED-EL

MED-EL Medical Electronics, a leader in implantable hearing solutions, is driven by a mission to overcome hearing loss as a barrier to communication. The Austrian-based, privately owned business was co-founded by industry pioneers Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair, whose groundbreaking research led to the development of the world's first micro-electronic multi-channel cochlear implant (CI), which was successfully implanted in 1977 and was the basis for what is known as the modern CI today. This laid the foundation for the successful growth of the company in 1990, when they hired their first employees. To date, MED-EL has grown to more than 2,200 employees from around 75 nations and has 30 locations worldwide. The company offers the widest range of implantable and non-implantable solutions to treat all types of hearing loss, enabling people in 124 countries to enjoy the gift of hearing with the help of a MED-EL device. MED-EL's hearing solutions include cochlear and middle ear implant systems, a combined Electric Acoustic Stimulation hearing implant system, auditory brainstem implants as well as surgical and non-surgical bone conduction devices.