

Students from Russia win the Young Vision Award 2018

- **Research project on “Environmentally Safe Offshore Platforms” wins young talent award sponsored by Wintershall and Gazprom International**
- **Young Vision Award goes international: For the first time, students from Austria, Croatia and India take part in the competition**

19 October 2018
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Leoben/Austria, 19 October 2018. Wintershall and Gazprom International presented yesterday the Young Vision Award 2018 in cooperation with Montanuniversität Leoben. In the final, Ksenia Sherbakova and Tatiana Kruglikova from the Sergo Ordzhonikidze Russian State University for Geological Prospecting (Moscow) were chosen by the expert jury with their project on “Environmentally Safe Offshore Platforms”. The prize, which has been awarded annually since 2013, honors particularly sustainable and efficient technology solutions developed by young scientists in the field of oil and natural gas production.

The title of this year's research task was "How can we use our E&P know-how to create new business opportunities in times of energy transition and decarbonization?" Students enrolled in academic programs related to the oil and gas sector were eligible to take part in the competition. The English-speaking competition has meanwhile established itself as an international institution. This year, not only Russian and German students entered their projects, but also contestants from Austria, Croatia and India. Four finalist teams from

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Croatia, Austria and Russia presented their projects to the international jury and a professional audience during the final event on 18 October. In the end, Ksenia Sherbakova and Tatiana Kruglikova managed to impress the jury most.

Each year, the final event is organized in cooperation with a European or Russian university. In 2018, Montanuniversität Leoben in Austria was chosen. Professor Herbert Hofstätter, Head of the Chair of Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Recovery at the university, is delighted: "It's a special honor for me that the competition has taken place this year in cooperation with our university. Science and business are closely interlinked at our university, and the contest enables the students to gain important experience in two ways." In close cooperation with the university, a varied program was developed for the event. Among others, the special guest Kirill Gurbanov, co-founder of the Russian start-up Willz, gave an interactive presentation on cross-industry issues, including those regarding how young professionals can bring their ideas to fruition and overcome hurdles along their career path.

"The desire to improve our lives with innovative solutions"

In his opening speech, Torsten Murin, Managing Director of Wintershall Russia, congratulated the finalists on their impressive ideas: "This is now the sixth time that the Young Vision Award is held, and each year the contestants face a new set of challenges. What doesn't change, though, is the curiosity and desire to use innovative solutions to improve our lives and work in our industry. This year's winners have once again done credit to the Young Vision Award."

"We strive to foster the exchange of knowledge between students and the expert community and to encourage young researchers to implement their ideas. For us, the Young Vision Award is a chance to go beyond traditional views, get a „breath of fresh air“, to develop original solutions and to realize them together," emphasized Alexander Nikiforov, Deputy Managing Director at Gazprom International.

Thilo Wieland, Wintershall's Executive Board member responsible for Russia, South America and North Africa, places particular importance on fostering qualified experts in the oil and gas sector. "Given the shortage of skilled workers in many industries, it's a particular pleasure for me to see that we have excellent young talent in our industry. This year's contestants will enrich the energy industry with new impulses and ideas in the future," he explained.

This year's winners, Ksenia Sherbakova and Tatiana Kruglikova, can look forward to not only an internship at Wintershall and the publication of their project in two industry journals, but also – should a feasibility study by a team of experts be successful – to 50,000 euros worth of project financing by the competition organizers.

Wintershall Holding GmbH, based in Kassel, Germany, is a wholly owned subsidiary of BASF in Ludwigshafen. The company has been active in the extraction of natural resources for 120 years, and in the exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas for over 85 years. Wintershall focuses on selected core regions where the company has built up a high level of regional and technological expertise. These are Europe, Russia, North Africa, South America, and increasingly the Middle East region. The company wants to expand its business further with exploration and production, selected partnerships, innovation and technological competence. Wintershall employs about 2,000 staff worldwide from 50 nations and is now Germany's largest, internationally active crude oil and natural gas producer.

At the end of September 2018, BASF and LetterOne signed a binding agreement to merge their respective oil and gas companies, Wintershall and DEA (Deutsche Erdöl AG). Subject to regulatory approvals, the transaction is expected to close in the first half of 2019. Wintershall DEA would become the leading independent oil and gas producer in Europe. BASF and LetterOne are planning an initial public offering (IPO) for Wintershall DEA in the medium term.

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