



dr. Katalin Barta
T +31 (0)50 363 42 32
K.Barta@rug.nl

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Our reference

Room 5115.0211
Nijenborgh 4
9747 AG Groningen
The Netherlands

Letter of Recommendation for Mr. Bálint Fridrich

Dear Sir/Madam,

With this letter I would like strongly support the application of Mr. Bálint Fridrich for the EBME Scholarship, supported by the Student Council of Budapest University of Technology and Economics.

I have had the chance to work with Bálint for 6 weeks during the summer of 2015, as he spent his visiting research internship in my laboratory in the field of green and sustainable chemistry. His performance and extraordinary motivation, as well as the scientific curiosity he showed during his work truly places him among the most talented students in his peer group. The central theme in my laboratory is the development of efficient chemical processes that use earth-abundant and inexpensive catalysts. The other key area is the conversion of non-edible renewable resources to useful chemicals and fuels. During his research stay Bálint was exposed to new concepts related to these scientific areas. He also participated in the weekly Institute Seminars as well as joint group meetings held with the group of Prof. Ben L. Feringa. Bálint also held presentations in English about his work.

Bálint's laboratory work concerned the direct coupling of aliphatic diols with ammonia using heterogeneous Cu and Zn based catalysts. This is not an easy topic and requires a set of skills to be mastered. This includes state of the art analytics of the (sometimes) rather complex reaction mixtures. During his practical work Bálint showed initiative in exploring his own ideas both in terms of how to approach the research question as well as implementing excellent practical approaches in the laboratory. In essence: he is a good chemist.

He completed more than 100 experiments in one month, and some of the promising results he obtained were used during a preparation of a successful EU Research proposal (ERC Starting grant 2015; of 1.5 Million Euro; Entitled: Cleave and Couple: Fully Sustainable Catalytic Conversion of Renewable resources to amines; granted: November 2015).

The Stratingh Institute is one of the top chemistry institutes in the Netherlands, and leading in the fields of chemistry, material sciences and nanotechnology in Europe. The research staff regularly publishes in internationally leading scientific journals such as Science and Nature, and other top journals in the respective fields. Correspondingly the institute has vibrant scientific atmosphere that fosters the development of young talented researchers.

The University of Groningen is internationally minded with staff members and students from various countries of Europe, as well as Asia and America. The Stratingh Institute has a unique atmosphere where graduate students from all corners of Europe are firmly integrated, and frequently communicate. Such atmosphere is important in research and in training of next generation of scientists. Bálint integrated very well within our Institute.

To conclude, I strongly support the application of Bálint Fridrich as I am sure he has the potential and scientific skills to become an excellent researcher in the future.

With best regards,
Dr. Katalin Barta
Assistant Professor of Green Chemistry and Catalysis