John Kennis is awarded Morino Lectureship, Japan

John Kennis has been awarded the 2012 Morino Lectureship for the Promotion of Molecular Sciences. He will receive ¥ 1000,000 (€ 10.000) to travel to Japan, where he will give the Morino Lecture on November 15 at the Nogaya Institute of Technology, followed by a series of lectures in Kyoto, Osaka, Nagoya, Hamamatsu and Tokyo.

The Morino Lectureship was established in 1985 by the late Professor Yonezo Morino, a renowned Japanese molecular spectroscopist, to support and encourage young scientists in the field of molecular science. It was designed to give the opportunity for a foreign distinguished scientist to come to Japan to instruct young scientists and students who are working in the frontier of various fields of molecular science.

John Kennis is the first person from the Netherlands to receive the award. Past lecturers to win the prestigious award have included Nobel Prize winner Robert Curl of Rice University, Richard Saykally of UC Berkeley, Richard Zare of Stanford University and Thomas Elsaesser of the Max-Born Institute.

The research of John Kennis involves the physico-chemical mechanisms of reception, storage and processing of photic energy and information in biology and biomimetic systems. To this end, he employs advanced time-resolved spectroscopic methods such as ultrafast transient absorption, time-resolved (2D) IR spectroscopy, multi-pulse and stimulated Raman spectroscopy. His research projects are focused on light-driven signal transduction mediated by newly discovered photoreceptor proteins with a high potential for practical applications and regulatory phenomena in natural and artificial photosynthetic light harvesting. Earlier this year he was awarded a VICI fellowship from the Netherlands science foundation.

Kennis considers the award as a great honor, as the Japanese scientific community has had a long-standing tradition of expertise and excellence in optical and vibrational molecular spectroscopy and using it to study the activation mechanisms of natural and synthetic biomimetic photosystems.