

2021 Euler Medal awarded to Hendrik Van Maldeghem

Hendrik Van Maldeghem is a world leader in combinatorial geometry. His research has spanned Tits buildings, generalised polygons, Moufang sets, projective spaces, unitals, Veronese and Hermitian varieties, and the Freudenthal-Tits magic square. Furthermore, his work has involved many connections to graph theory, coding theory and design theory. What is striking is that Hendrik is equally at ease in the abstract world of buildings as he is getting his hands dirty unravelling all the details of very specific combinatorial structures.

At age 28 his habilitation was awarded the Science prize of the Royal Academy of Belgium, and in 1999 he received the Hall Medal for his outstanding research record. He has published over 250 papers, many in world leading journals, and three books, with the one on generalised polygons now being the standard reference in the field. He also co-edited the collected works of Wolf and Abel Prizes winner Jacques Tits.

Hendrik has advised over 20 PhD students, several of whom now have a permanent academic position. He also mentored many early- and mid-career researchers. His high standing as a research leader has been recognised by his election as one of only five mathematicians in the Royal Flemish Academy for Sciences and Arts. He has also been actively involved in mathematics education for many years, and is regularly involved in outreach activities, including the writing of articles popularising mathematics.