

Preface

The 2nd ECS Workshop on Annexins, Targets and Calcium-Binding Proteins in Pathology

This workshop was held in the beautiful Smolenice castle in Slovakia from June 3-6, 2009 and organized by the European Calcium Society (Claus Heizmann) in cooperation with the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Albert Breier).

The village of Smolenice is located in the west of Slovakia, about 60 km from the capital city of Bratislava. The Smolenice castle is located above the village on the foothills of the Carpathian mountains.

First documents of the existence of this castle date back to the 13th century. During the Napoleon war the castle decayed after the main building and the tower had been destroyed. Reconstruction of the castle was started early in the 20th century.

In 1953 the castle was handed over to the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) to become their representative International Congress Center.

65 scientists (mostly young investigators) attended this 2nd ECS workshop; the participants came from 15 different countries including Argentina, Canada, USA, Russia and Poland.

The scientific program opened with the keynote lecture of Joseph Metzger (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis) discussing the defective intracellular calcium handling in diastolic heart failure (DHF) and the gene transfer of parvalbumin restoring myocardial performance in DHF.

The next day two sessions followed discussing the structures and functions of annexins and their interactions with target proteins with the emphasis on the EF-hand calcium-binding proteins sorcin and S100 proteins.

The 3rd day was devoted to the role of the calcium-binding proteins in pathology and their application in clinical diagnostics with excellent lectures on calcineurin in leukemias, calpain in Alzheimer's disease, CaBP's in allergic diseases, S100A4 in tumor growth and metastasis and S100B in psychiatric disorders.

The final day was devoted to the calcium-binding proteins of the endoplasmatic reticulum under normal and pathological conditions. Highly interesting lectures covered the following topics: Calcium-dependent interplay between ER and multi-drug resistancy, calcium-channels in health and disease, calcium-binding chaperons in the ER, calcium stores in relation to ischemia, and regulation of S100P in cancer cells.

An impressive highlight was the very lively poster session of the young investigators.

This issue of the Journal "General Physiology and Biophysics" of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia contains the papers of the invited speakers. The poster abstracts will be displayed on the ECS web page and on the web page of General Physiology and Biophysics.

The organizers are especially grateful to Branislav Uhrík (SAS), the local organizers, and Roland Pochet (General Secretary of the ECS) helping in many tasks, turning this workshop into a memorable success.

More information with pictures of the lectures, poster session and of the social activities are found on our ECS webpage (www.ulb.ac.be/assoc/ecs) and the upcoming ECS Newsletter.

Summarizing I can say that this was an excellent and a well attended workshop and we are looking forward to the 11th European Symposium on Calcium which will be organized by Jacek Kuznicki and his team on the 5th-8th September 2010 in Warsaw, Poland.

Claus W. Heizmann

University of Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland

E-mail: claus.heizmann@bluewin.ch