The 2nd Biennial of the “French Speaking Space” in the respiration field brought together specialists from more than 25 countries. Nearly 1000 respiratory health professionals from more than 25 French-speaking countries came at the Quebec City Convention Center, from October 12th to October 14th, 2017, for the 2nd Biennale of the French Speaking Space in Respirology. On the specific theme of “Personalized medicine”, pulmonologists, radiologists, researchers and health professionals presented their latest research findings to improve the health of patients with chronic lung diseases.

The honorary co-presidents, the pulmonologist Louis-Philippe Boulet, professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Quebec, and his French counterpart, the pulmonologist and allergist Bernard Pigeariax, were the masters of the whole scenario of this congress. “When we know that respiratory diseases are one of the most common causes of morbidity and mortality on the planet, we feel the urgency of collaborating to provide better services to the population here and elsewhere in the world, especially in developing countries”, said professor Boulet at the opening ceremony.

The opening ceremony was at the same time an unique opportunity to present the progress of francophone pneumology in our world (Figure 1) and an interesting lecture about “When Canada Became Quebec... A Semantic Walk on the Banks of the St. Lawrence”, made by the secretary of French Speaking Space, Bernard Pigearias.

There were three major thrusts among the lectures presented in these three days: clinical research, basic science, and education for health professionals. The congress programme not only provided an update on the most recent advances in respiratory science, but also responded to the express needs of the developing countries regarding the improvement of respiratory care with sometimes limited resources. Workshops like “Field and laboratory effort test” (François Maltais, Eric Nadreau, Canada), “Tests: volumes and flow rates, diffusion, oscillometry, ventilation distribution” (Ynuk Bossé - Canada, Fares Gouzi - France), “Assessment of respiratory diseases outside laboratory (what to do when there is no laboratory nearby)” (Véronique Pépin - Canada, Ridha Charfi - Tunisia) etc. have been organized during this congress to help participants to learn about best care and best practices according to specific needs and the availability of diagnostic and follow-up means, as well as treatments available in these different countries. The main theme of the congress was “Personalised medicine”, which was defined as “offering the appropriate treatment to the right person at the right time”. It was not only an offer of specific treatments to different phenotypes or endotypes of respiratory diseases, but also an adaptation to the resources and the environment of the patient, and to the psychosocial and other individual characteristics. I found very interesting some topics like: “Metabolic and Cardiovascular Disorders” (Frédéric Gagnadoux, France), “Is lung cancer screening cost-effective?” (Catherine Labbé, Canada), “How to integrate biomarkers into the diagnostic process” (Lise Tremblay, Canada), “Therapeutic strategies in pulmonary arterial hypertension: European recommendations” (Marc Humbert, France) etc. Basic research was also covered by different well-known speakers with interesting presentations, like: “Immunity, inflammation and angiogenesis” (Olivier Adotevi, France), “Identification of biomarkers to personalize the treatment following resection surgery for a pulmonary adenocarcinoma stage 1” (Alison Clemenceau, Canada), “Preclinical advances and therapy of tomorrow in pulmonary hypertension” (Sebastien Bonnet, Canada) etc.
The organisers included in the programme themes familiar to developing countries, such as tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, but also most recent developments in the fields of “-omics”, biomarkers and innovative therapies, COPD, asthma and obstructive sleep apnoea syndromes etc. The Romanian Society of Pneumology was one of the partners of the congress and the small Romanian delegation actively participated in the discussions and programme as communicator (“Epidemiology and management of COPD and asthma in Central Europe” - Florin Mihălțan, Valentin Cosei) or co-chairman (Monica Pop).

The congress successfully achieved its purpose. In Quebec, all the participants used this opportunity to provide common platforms for improving communications between these francophone societies, acting as partners sharing French as a common language, fostering knowledge translation, exchanging expertise and collaboration in order to improve care, teaching and research. This international meeting was the result of the collaboration between several organizations and associations, including the Respiratory Health Network of the Quebec Health Research Fund (RSR-FRQS), the Association of Pneumologists of the Province of Quebec (APPQ), the Quebec Respiratory Health Education Network (RQESR), the Quebec Lung Association (QPA), the Francophone Respiratory Space (EFP), the Respiratory Research Days (J2R), the French-speaking Respiratory Society (SPLF) and many other national medical associations that share the French language. The Faculty of Medicine hosted this event organized by the team of the Vice-Dean of Pedagogy and Continuing Professional Development in collaboration with the FRQS Respiratory Health Network. Quebec City, this UNESCO World Heritage site, recently declared to be the best city in Canada and the second in North America to visit by tourists, was a wonderful host1). At the same time, it was the place where we found this mixture of French Canadian medicine, of both French and English traditions, with an important link to western Canada and world communities, including France, developed exponentially in the last few decades. This meeting reinforced the links already established between all French communities and contributed to the improvement of health outcomes worldwide.  

Figure 2. World map of the francophone community (Fr.: French territory; OIF: Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. Reproduced and modified from Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and Louis-Philippe Boulet(1,2), with permission from the publisher)

References