

The Eurasian Respiratory and Allergy Summit is an activity linking the two Europes

Euro summitul pe respirator și alergii – o activitate care leagă cele două Europe

Florin Dumitru Mihălțan

“Marius Nasta” Institute of Pneumophthysiology, Bucharest, Romania

Corresponding author: Florin Dumitru Mihălțan, E-mail: mihaltan@starnets.ro

The Euroasian Respiratory and Allergy Summit took place between September 6-9, 2018, in Kiev, being the third consecutive annual event, the last year being held in Turkey and Montenegro. Organized by the ERA Consortium, this manifestation has among its objectives the interdisciplinarity created on three areas of daily medical activities: pulmonary and respiratory diseases, otorhinolaryngology and pediatrics. Perhaps this led to the peculiarities of expression of those who presented papers and have focused, according to the toponomy of the respective sessions, on themes anchored in the practical realities of their countries. At this congress, the organizers kept their word, amongst the participants predominating pneumologists, allergologists and ENT specialists. Sixteen countries and more than 400 participants typically define a small congress. However, the quality of the papers was at an international level, and each speaker tried to give his/her best on the subject that he/she had fathomed in practice. The bronchial asthma was the preferred subject of the organizers. Presentations such as: “From Food to Allergy Asthma” (Mahir İğde), “Asthma Challenges in the Treatment of Asthma in Teens and Young People” (Branisleva Milenkovic), “United Airway Disease” (Asım Kaytaç) or “A Review of the Diagnosis of Allergy and Treatment” (Didem Yalçın) were some of the presentations enjoyed by the participants.

Another chapter generously approached at this congress was the idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, where the quality of the speakers put an imprint on presentations such as: “New Diagnostic Criteria for Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis” (Demosthene Bouras), “Progress in IPF” (Argyrios Tzouvelekis), “Treatments in Progress in IPF” (Yaroslav Dzyublyk), etc. The COPD approaches did not lack either, with presentations about: “What is new in the diagnosis and treatment of COPD” (Perlat Kapisyzi), “Altitude and COPD” (Talant Sooranbaev), “Management and Prevention of the Exacerbations of COPD” (Ali Zamin Sadıgov), etc.

Among other important issues that were approached during this event, I would like to mention: the tobacco discussion panel, with topics such as “Heated tobacco – a new lie” (Florin Mihălțan), “Nicotine and degrading nicotine deficiency of bacteria” (Kamal Maurice Hanna); somnology, with presentations related to “Sleep Apnea Syndrome and Heart Failure” (Florin Mihălțan), “News in Surgical Treatment of Apnea Syndrome” (Mustafa Gerek), and “Important Points in Surgical Treatment of Apnea



Syndrome” (Dieieva Y et al.). Among other topics that I noticed, worth mentioning here are: “Antibiotic Resistance of Nosocomial Infections – Which Are The Risk Factors for Multi-Disease Resistance of Pathogens?” (Ali Zamin Sadıgov), “The Overlap Asthma – BPOC” (Pınar Yıldız), “Interventional Bronchology” (Turhan Ece), etc.

Running at a time when the Turkish lira collapsed, the organizers mobilized by dr. Bulent Tutuoglu managed to cope with the challenges posed by the financial crisis and maintained an international level of participation. On the other hand, Kiev, the capital of a country that still has the visible wounds of an ongoing war, has been a challenge for organizers, which they have also dealt well with. Once again, the initiators demonstrated that the bridge between the two Europes – Western and Central and the Eastern one – is functional and deserves to be maintained and extended by other future events. ■



Paris at the reunion with international pneumology

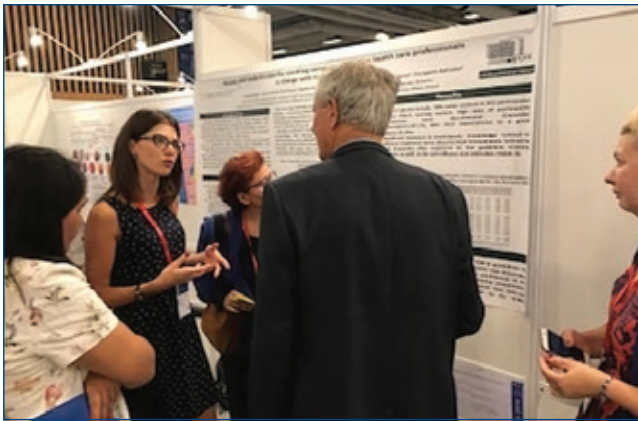
Parisul la reîntâlnirea cu pneumologia internațională

Florin Dumitru Mihălțan

Between September 16-19, 2018, in Paris was held a new edition of the annual European Society of Pneumology Congress, under the slogan: "Help shape the future of respiratory science and medicine!" In an open competition with two other CHEST and ATS congresses, this meeting remains specific to Europe, with a remarkable openness to other continents. The onset was, as usual, with a day of pre-congress courses, numerous, on topics such as: asthma and COPD, imaging in pneumology, NIV – new challenges, emergency bronchoscopy, new diagnostic and therapeutic gains in lung cancer, interventional pneumology, mucoviscidosis – adult management,, etc. Concomitantly, joint events with bilingual symposiums with associations representing the main, international languages circulating in the world, such as SPLF, Society

of Russian Pneumology, ALAT, Chinese Society of Pneumology,, etc., were held in the first day. The main topics of the congress covered three important areas – fundamental research, the clinical part, translational medicine – and the conditions approached were both high-frequency ones, such as COPD, bronchial asthma, lung cancer and bronchiectasis, but also rarer diseases, such as diffuse interstitial pneumonitis, mucoviscidosis,, etc.

There have been many subjects, with a roomful audience, such as: phenotyping and endotyping in asthma, recent advances in ciliary dyskinesia, bronchiectasis, a new look at diagnosis and therapy, optimal therapy in pulmonary hypertension, fungal infections in intensive care units, pulmonary cancer immunotherapy, lung cancer screening for the solitary node. Different types of diag-



nostic interventions that have been dissected in terms of long-time use have been addressed. Topics such as: endoscopic solutions in obstructive diseases, digital evolution in respiratory medicine, cryobiopsy in pulmonary fibrosis, clinical interpretations in spirometry, etc. made congress rooms insufficient. An interesting daily offer for congress participants was “Lung on Fire”, where complex clinical cases were extensively discussed by a group of experts and the audience. Likewise, practical workshops have proven that any presence of reputable specialists is beneficial for those present at the congress. Last but not least, the voting system at each session, as well as the existence of a dialog with the audience at each session, made digitally, whether it was a symposium or a clinical case session, emerged as a new and interesting idea, stimulating effectively the audience. The international pneumological issues have not been avoided, and so the participants had the opportunity to get acquainted with the extensive knowledge they have gained over the past year in areas such as: lower respiratory tract infections and bacterial resistance; COPD and asthma – chronic noncommunicable diseases; the environment with climatic changes and respiratory consequences; biologically targeted therapies in lung cancer; pulmonary interstitial diseases, etc. At the same time, they did not miss “State of the art – year in review”, focusing on topics like: the role of inflammation and bacteria in lung cancer; sleep and sleep disorders, progress in community pneumonia management; mechanical ventilation in acute or chronic respiratory failure, etc. Like at any congress, the pharmaceutical company symposiums were present, with multiple challenges related to the competition between bronchodilators in the dual bronchodilator therapy and the triple therapy of COPD. There are also worth mentioning, in this respect, other offers, such as: “Novelties in the nebulization treatment with inhaled corticosteroids” (Astra Zeneca), “Anti-IL5 – a therapeutic option in eosinophilic bronchial asthma” (GSK), “Priorities and preferences: the inhaler makes the difference in COPD” (Boehringer Ingelheim), “Bronchiectasis from guides to clinical practice” (Grifols), “Asthma patient’s day: what can we do?” (Novartis), “New dimensions in interventional pneumology” (Olympus), etc.

But the Romanian presence and achievements were,

in my opinion, exceptional in the premieres during this congress. Thus, the delegation consisted of over 120 pneumologists, and the number of communications and posters was 12. Apparently, nothing new. Traditionally, this congress is used constantly to reveal the progress in the Romanian pneumology since the last manifestation of such an important international event. The Romanian stand at “Village of Nations” was appreciated for its concision and design, and the way the multitude of information was distributed. However, the premise was completely different – for the first time, a team of young enthusiasts (dr. Ana Nebunoiu, dr. Valentin Coșei, dr. Andrei Leșan) participated in a new competition of young clinicians with answers related to clinical cases, paraclinical results, etc. Concomitantly, for the first time in the Game Zone competition, there was a Romanian winner: dr. Petru Emil Muntean.

Paris, a city that makes the first steps towards reducing urban pollution, was a welcoming host for over 22,000 pneumologists. At the border between summer and autumn, the city offered to congress participants

a good visiting day in their time off, with famous historical monuments, mentioned in many international guides, but also unique occasions of delight with delicatessen of the well-known French cuisine. ■



Pneumo Update 2018 – a traditional opening towards Eastern Europe

Pneumo Update Europa 2018 – o deschidere tradițională spre Europa de Est

Florin Dumitru Mihălțan

With its 5th edition conducted on June 15-16, 2018, in Budapest, the Pneumo Update Europe has already become a traditional manifestation, with a multitude of echoes in the pneumological world. The evidence was the increase in number of participants that reached 750 in 2018, and the generous offer on topics such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), pneumonia, pulmonary endoscopy, bronchial asthma, etc. However, this meeting on the update of disease information has started with a review of the posters that have increased in number from year to year. The secret of the success of this manifestation is generated by the participation of the same opinion leaders, well-known scientific personalities who have an important synthesis capacity in filtering this medical information in the field during one year.

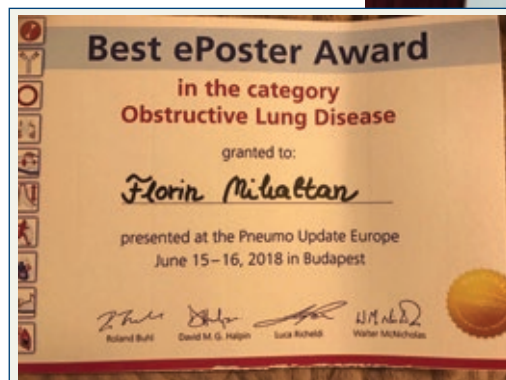
Thus, on the chapter on tuberculosis and infections, prof. Cristoph Lang (Germany) reviewed the progress made in the rapid diagnosis of this contagious disease and the new therapies for multidrug-resistant cases. In the oncology field, Johan Vansteenkiste (Belgium) approached the new biological treatments and their way of integration into the complete diagnosis of lung cancer. The subject of allergy was covered by professor Stephan Durham (UK), and asthma news was presented by professor Ronald Buhl (Germany), who mainly addressed the phenotypes and endoplasmic reticulum stress in asthma, as well as how to integrate the new strategies for controlling severe asthma. COPD hasn't been forgotten either. Here, professor David Halpin (UK) has marked the way in which the new bronchodilator associations can be assimilated and has brought pro and con arguments for the triple therapy. In the somnology chapter, professor Walter McNicholas (Ireland) reviewed the therapeutic advances in sleep apnea syndrome and the question marks left by studies that had analyzed the development of sleep-related comorbidities. The interstitial diseases were under the magnifying glass of Luca Richeldi (Italy), who detailed the results of various forms of illness, as well as the new antifibrotic therapies with the possible combinations that could be achieved. The novelty of this manifestation was represented by the pulmonary imagistic topic – what does the scientific world say about it (prof. Ulrich Kauczor, from Germany) and the update on alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.

Day two was as rich in offers. In pulmonary vascular disease, professor Marc

Humbert (France) approached both the progress of the rare forms of vasculitis and the frequent ones, followed by prof. Felix Herth (Germany), who exposed new studies related to the solitary nodule, cryobiopsy and interventions in COPD. A special part was dedicated to acute respiratory failure and intensive care, where prof. Paolo Pelosi (Italy) talked about the reclassification of acute respiratory distress syndrome, non-invasive ventilation in this condition and routine nebulisation. Pleural diseases were reviewed by prof. Julius Janssen (Netherlands), who showed new approaches to pleural infections and mesothelioma. In the last part of the meeting it was highlighted, under the pneumonia chapter, the interference of steroid pneumonia, the effects of cardiovascular pneumonia in the community and fan-induced infections, by Mark Woodhead (UK), and the transplant registers with their lessons by prof. Gilbert Massard (France).

In conclusion, prof. Ronald Buhl, the soul and the initiator of this event, awarded the prizes for the best posters. The Romanian presence was important – over 30 colleagues, which drew the attention of the organizers. One of the Romanian posters, about the relationship between the doctor and the patient with COPD, was among the award receivers on this occasion.

Thus, having reached the 5th edition, this manifestation remains an important point in the annual calendar of international pneumology, and the quality of the speakers, as well as their extremely didactic and synthetic way of approaching the important topics from the practitioner's life may shorten the access of the latter to the novelties of the year of diagnostic and therapy strategies. ■





RSP – a reliable and overactive society

SRP – o societate responsabilă și hiperactivă

Florin Dumitru Mihălțan

November was a full month, with many events where the Romanian Society of Pneumology (RSP) was either the organizer, or the partner, covering four projects that reconfirm once again that it is a responsible and professional association.

The date of November 12 marked the press conference as a preamble of the World Day Against Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and the free spirometry testing conducted in front of the Unirea Shopping Center, on November 17-18, 2018. In Romania, approximately one million people suffer from COPD. This disease, which is often diagnosed too late, precisely because its symptoms are not specific and can easily be confounded with either the effects of smoking or those of aging, was analyzed and presented to the public with its specific symptoms: cough, expectoration, choking, fatigue, low effort tolerance. At the same time, the preliminary data of the second national COPD survey were presented for the first time in the country. The campaign **“Do you know how old your lungs are?”** thus reached the 10th edition. With the occasion of this campaign, 703 people were tested and the RSP offer was appreciated by the population.

The National Day without Tobacco – a day proposed by the Romanian Government, provided by the art. 107 par. (2) of the Constitution and the art. 8 of the Law no. 349/2002 on the prevention and combating the effects of tobacco products consumption and adopted by Decision 1270/2002 in order to raise the awareness of the population of Romania regarding the benefit of quitting smoking – was another event in November. It was celebrated differently from previous years in a press conference held at the head-

quarters of the National College of Physicians. The subject, which was not accidentally approached on this occasion, at this location for 2018 was: “The medical community is gathering the ranks in the fight against the promotion of tobacco consumption”. In the evolution context of 2018 regarding strategical shift in the marketing of transnational tobacco companies in recent years through new products (electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products) and positioning, the Romanian and international medical community was found facing off a seemingly “new” challenge, but similar to the one thirty-four years ago, when less harmful conventional tobacco offers were widely promoted for the “benefit” of the consumer. On one hand, there was a trend in 2018 of smoking “renormalization” in the new alternative offered by the transnational tobacco companies and, on the other hand, there were attempts to infiltrate the tobacco industry in the medical activities of non-governmental organizations and professional medical associations, with attempts of associating the name of recruited doctors under contract by the industry with the names of medical personalities and academics recognized for the effort made for years in the field of tobacco control. At the initiative of RSP representatives, the nucleus that consisted of Romanian Society of Pneumology, Romanian Society of Cardiology (SRC), Romanian National Society of Family Medicine (SNMF), Romanian Society of Internal Medicine (SRMI) and Heart Foundation, who were joined by the Romanian Academy (through the Medical Science Section), the Academy of Medical Sciences – Internal Medicine Department, Prevention Forum (FP), The European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP) and the “First



The campaign: "Do you know how old your lungs are?" in Bucharest.

Tobacco-Free Generation Initiative" generated at this press conference at the headquarters of the National College of Physicians, starting from the principles of the "Framework Convention on Tobacco Control", transposed into Law no. 332/2005, related to the prevention of interference of the commercial interests of the tobacco industry in public health decision-making processes, professional medical and patient associations, the delimitation of these activities of the tobacco industry by healthcare professionals who no longer have to accept funding from it and not to be manipulated about the so-called less harmful effects of new offers of electronic cigarettes and tobacco products. In order to make the relationship with the tobacco industry more transparent for any "white coat" and a new code of ethics, dr. Magda Ciobanu (WHO expert) exposed a model of a statement (interests or conflicts of interest) to allow the knowledge of possible contractual or sponsorship relationships from the tobacco industry with doctors, professional associations and NGOs with a medical or pharmaceutical background public health. This model, which will be finalized after this conference, will be proposed to all the doctors and professionals or patient associations in the country, and will be discussed to get a final form at the Romanian College of Physicians Forum and in the boards of professional associations. The conclusions of this press conference were that the only way to reduce the risk of smoking-induced illness is to give up completely any form of tobacco consumption, as the World Health Organization has been drawing attention since 2006, saying that "tobacco is lethal in any form and anyway disguised".

Another event where the SRP has made a partnership with the "Marius Nasta" Pneumophysiology Institute was recorded on November 20, 2018. The two institutions officially launched on November 20, 2018, the E-DETECT TB program, the first active tuberculosis detection campaign in our country, carried out through a mobile caravan.

E-DETECT TB is in fact part of a wider project at European level in countries like Bulgaria, Italy, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Romania and Sweden, and includes several components, among which there are active diagnostics (for Romania and Bulgaria) being implemented within the National Program for Prevention, Supervision and Control of Tuberculosis in Romania (PNPSCT), coordinated by the "Marius Nasta" Pneumophysiology Institute in order to ensure the early detection, active, of patients with tuberculosis (TB). This part of the project was welcomed, given that tuberculosis is a major public health problem in Romania, with the highest disease incidence among all EU countries. The vulnerable people will be at the heart of the E-DETECT TB project, and the active detection with these caravans will include: *inmates, homeless people, Romani people, drug users, and very poor populations, with limited access to health-care*. The project size will allow for the examination of about **20,000 people in the E-DETECT TB**, with the possibility of extending up to 25,000 beneficiaries. The examinations will be carried out with the help of **mobile medical units equipped with imaging equipment and molecular diagnostics** by specialists from the "Marius Nasta" Pneumophysiology Institute and the support of PNPSCT. The first step is to complete a medical questionnaire at the entrance of the person who will be examined in the mobile medical unit and then the recording of the medical and sociodemographic data. After that, a lung radiograph will be performed, which will be transmitted *via* a telemedicine system to the "Marius Nasta" Institute of Pneumophysiology, where a pneumologist within the project will analyze the image result. At the same time, another interpretation is going to be made from a physician from the Dutch partner, KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation. The identified TB suspects after anamnesis, in which the result of the radiograph was abnormal, will



The press conference held at the headquarters of the National College of Physicians with the occasion of "National Day without tobacco"

give a sputum sample for the bacteriological investigation. For the sputum exam, the mobile medical unit is equipped with an advanced automated diagnostic system that can identify the DNA of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex (MTB) and the resistance to one of the antibiotics used in the TB treatment. The patients diagnosed with TB will subsequently enter a **complete treatment and monitoring program** (including treatment-enhancing interventions) according to the national recommendations on TB control. The total value of the project in our country was 970,449 euros and it was co-financed by the Ministry of Health, which allocated 612,069 euros.

The date of November 21, 2018 marked another press conference, because November was and has traditionally remained the Lung Cancer Awareness Month throughout the world. In order to draw attention to the importance of early diagnosis of lung cancer, the Federation of Cancer Patients Associations (FABC) launched the campaign "**Inspiring Hope**", with RSP as a partner. In 2018, in Romania, 83,461 new cases of cancer have been registered,



E detect TB project

and 50,902 Romanians are losing their lives due to cancer, according to GLOBOCAN's recent statistics (Global Cancer Observatory, the world's most up-to-date cancer world map) that recently published new data for Romanians. **The statistics show that 30% of cancer deaths in Romania are caused by lung cancer.** The oncologists, pneumologists, patient associations representatives, etc. were present at this meeting and talked about the need for an early diagnosis, new treatment technologies, innovation, biological treatments, phenotypes, and new official therapeutic tests for lung cancer. The survivor testimonials of patients with a history of lung cancer came to reinforce the mass-media messages about the early identification and screening of any form of lung cancer.

All these events reconfirm the implication of RSP and the way in which Romanian pneumologists are committed to voluntary activities and collaboration with the authorities, the patient and the professional associations in the implementation of initiatives for the active prevention and detection of certain respiratory diseases. ■



Launching the campaign "Inspiring Hope"