

To the Memory of our friend Helmut Lechner

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is hard for me to speak here today. I still cannot reconcile with the fact that Prof. Lechner is not with us any more. I have known Prof. Lechner for about twenty years, and had the feeling that he was not changing at all during that long period. Tall, straight, smiling, always ready for a talk, a dialogue, for an expert opinion or for a friendly advice.

Much has been said about his exceptional professionalism, numerous articles, researches, prizes and awards, but what distinguished him from the majority of people with similar qualities, it is his limitless humanism joined with supreme professionalism. Always and continuously investigating, in search how to give the best help to people whose health required it.

The Pula Symposia, now Congresses, are firstly his achievements, which he carefully cherished, especially in occasions when it was hardest. For Croatia it was the period of the recent war, when we were exposed to merciless killings and aggression of Serbian-Chetnik powers: the continuation of the meetings was really jeopardized. In 1992 he organized very successful Pula Symposium in Graz, but already the next year, with his greatest personal engagement, the Symposium came back to Pula.

Together with Prof. Barac he was organizing for many years these meetings, creating them to the modern scientific Congresses, with the significance they have today.

What to say at the end? Relentless are the laws of nature and they snatch our beloved from us regardless how much we love and need them: so we lost Professor Lechner as well. For me, and I believe for most of you, the Pula Congress without him is not what it used to be. But, knowing what these Congresses meant to him, it is our duty to keep it going further on in his honor and to work on its continuous improvement, for all of us now, and for the coming generations in the future.

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