

In Memoriam

IVAN HAPALA (1954 – 2022)



On January 2 2022 passed away after a long struggle with an insidious disease our colleague and friend Ivan Hapala, former director of the Institute of Biochemistry and Animal Genetics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and member of the National Committee of COSPAR.

Dr. Ivan Hapala was born on November 9, 1954 in Bratislava. After graduating in genetics at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava, in 1979 he joined the Institute of Physiology of Farm Animals of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) in Ivanka pri Dunaji. This institution in its various forms (in 1990 the Institute of Biochemistry and Animal Genetics of SAS was established from the workplace in Ivanka, which became a part of the Centre of Biosciences in 2017 and moved from Ivanka pri Dunaji to Bratislava) remained loyal during his life.

His dissertation, which he developed under the guidance of Prof. Kováč, defended in 1987 in Brno. He completed long-term stays abroad at the University of Cincinnati in the USA, twice at the University of Bordeaux in France, as well as shorter study stays at universities in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. He gradually held various positions at the workplace (head of laboratory, chairman of the scientific board) and from 2002 to 2014 he was the director of the Institute of Biochemistry and Animal Genetics of the SAS.

*In his scientific work, he focused on various aspects of biogenesis and membrane function in eukaryotic cells in the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* model. His most important results include the introduction of a method for monitoring sterol transport, as well as original knowledge about the effect of antisterole antifungal drugs on yeast. Recently, despite the insidious disease, he has focused on biotechnological applications, especially the use of yeast as a producer of lipid substances.*

More than 60 publications in WoS with almost 1,400 citations testify to his scientific qualities. He was responsible for many domestic scientific projects (VEGA, APVV, Research and Education Center of Excellence APVV, European Social Fund Biomembrane project) and several foreign projects (Slovak-American scientific and technical program, Ost-West projects, Aktion Österreich-Slowakei). He educated eight doctoral students and 11 graduates. He was chairman

of the Yeast Commission of the Czechoslovak Microbiological Society, representative of Slovakia in the International Commission on Yeasts, and was repeatedly on the organizing committee of the Yeast Lipid Conferences.

For us colleagues, however, his contribution to the positive atmosphere at the workplace, which he co-created during many years of his work in the management of the institute, was invaluable. We will lack his advice in deciding on the future of the workplace, in creating conceptual documents, in the day-to-day running of the institute. And above all, dear Ivan, we will miss your enthusiasm and optimism, which you maintained until the last minute.

Honor your memory!

Text: Ľubor Košťál, Institute of Biochemistry and Animal Genetics CB SAS

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