



Nephrologisches Seminar Heidelberg

9-11. 03. 2023



Eberhard-Ritz-Lecture:

**„Integration of Eastern countries into the European
renal community”**

Andrzej Więcek

Department of Nephrology, Transplantation and Internal Medicine
Medical University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

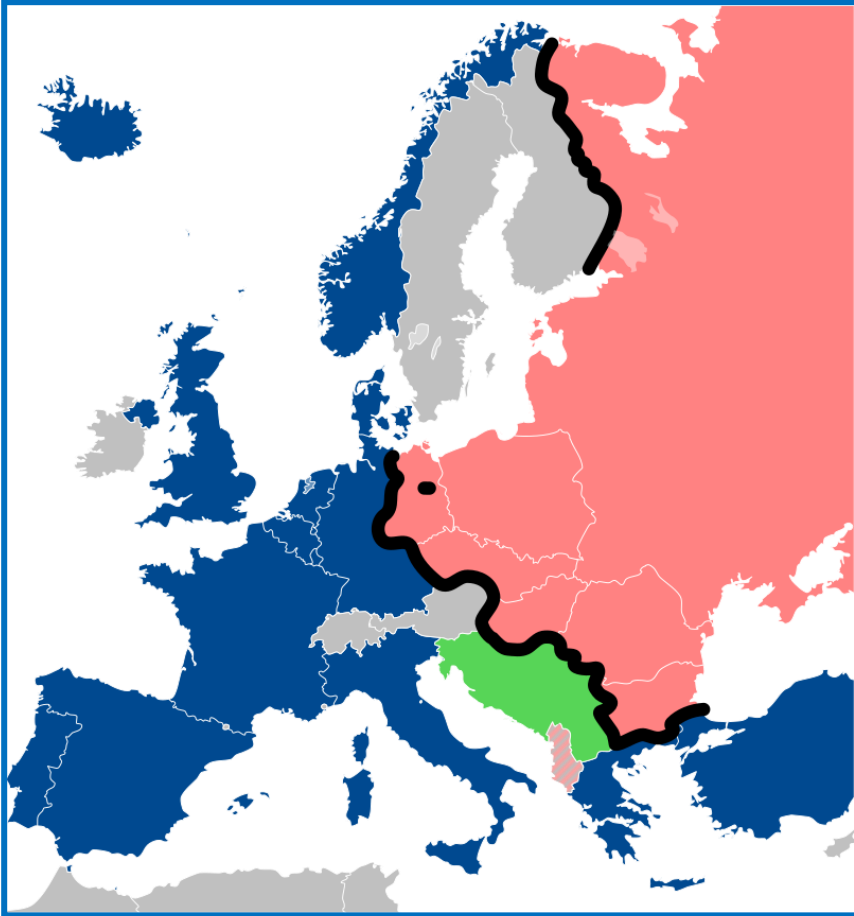
e-mail: awiecek@sum.edu.pl

Outline of the lecture: Integration of Eastern countries into the European renal community



- A bit of history

The situation in Europe after the Second World War



After the Potsdam Conference (July 17th –August 2nd, 1945), Europe and also Germany were divided on two parts.
Winston Churchill during his speach in Westminster College in Fulton (Missouri, USA) in March 5th, 1946
– used for the first time the term: „**iron curtain**”

Winston Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech—March 5th, 1946

- On March 5th, 1946, at Westminster College in Fulton, Churchill's famous words **“From Stettin in the Baltic, to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent,”** initiated the notion of the Cold War and defined the geopolitical landscape for the next 50 years.



Westminster College in Fulton, USA,
March 5th 1946

The Berlin Wall - a symbol of the division of Europe into Eastern and Western parts



The beginning of the construction of the Berlin Wall – August 13th, 1961

The Independent Self-Governing Trade Union „Solidarity” („Solidarność”) was officially approved in Gdańsk in 1980



SOLIDARNOŚĆ

Lech Wałęsa
Leader of the Independent Trade Union
„Solidarity” („Solidarność”)
Gdańsk 1980

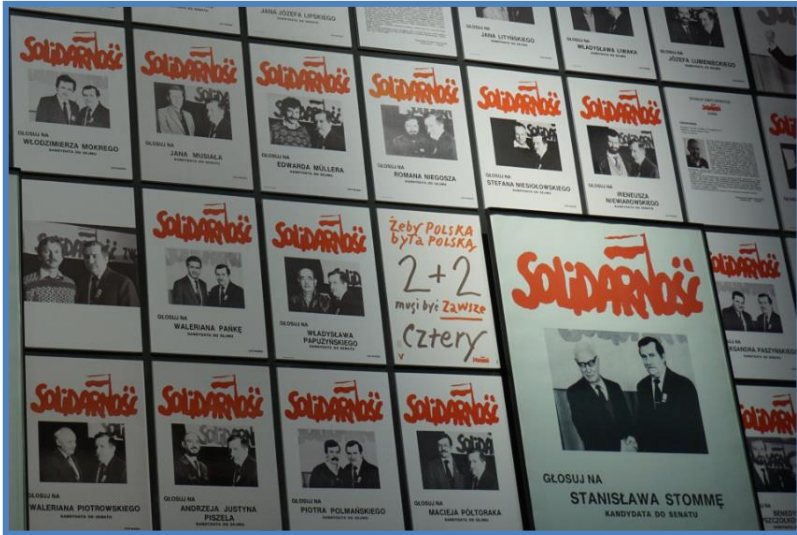


The Martial law in Poland, introduced: December 13th 1981 – ended: July 22nd 1983

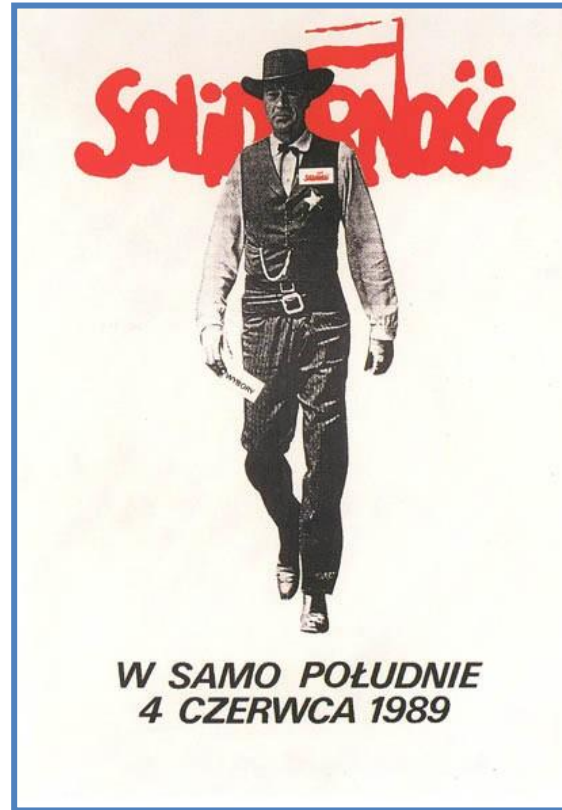


Soldiers and ZOMO squads with police batons preparing to disperse and beat protesters

The first free elections of June 4th 1989 in Poland. The defeat of the communist system and the triumph of "Solidarity"



Solidarity candidates
electoral list



Solidarity official
election poster



Lech Wałęsa votes in Gdańsk,
June 4th 1989

The fall of the Berlin Wall - a symbol of the division of Europe into Eastern and Western parts



The beginning of the fall of the Berlin Wall – on November 9th, 1989

The reunification of East and West Germany was made officially on October 3rd, 1990, almost one year after the fall of the Berlin Wall

The end of the Communist system in Central and Eastern Europe

- By the summer of 1990, all of the former communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe were replaced by democratically elected governments.
- These dramatic changes were followed by a great optimism, but at the same time a big differences were recognized in economics as well as in the science and research capabilities.
- In such a situation, the help and collaboration with Western scientists was the only effective way to reduce these huge differences.

Outline of the lecture: Integration of Eastern countries into the European renal community



- A bit of history
- Publication in „The Lancet”

Publication in „The Lancet”

Perspectives

Profile

Andrzej Więcek: east meets west in nephrology

In 1985, Andrzej Więcek made a journey that would change his life. Boarding the train in Katowice, the Polish city where he was born and raised, had trained in medicine and nephrology, and, at the age of 35, already had a wife and young family, Więcek set off for a year-long scholarship at the University of Heidelberg in what was then West Germany. The journey from Katowice was only about 1000 km, but for Więcek, who had never before set foot outside Soviet eastern Europe, it felt like he'd arrived on a different planet.

In Katowice, thanks to the expert guidance and ingenuity of the renowned Polish nephrologist Franciszek Kokot, Więcek had access to techniques such as hormone assays that were unheard of elsewhere in eastern Europe, but research was still a struggle. “Even small details in the

One of Więcek's abiding passions is nurturing the next generation of nephrologists, particularly in eastern Europe. As well as helping to establish pioneering continuing medical education (CME) courses for nephrologists in Europe with his long-time collaborator Ritz, he also used his election as Secretary-Treasurer of ERA-EDTA in 2011 to put forward several initiatives to help younger colleagues take part in the organisation. “Andrzej has a real commitment to supporting younger nephrologists”, says Fox; “he conceived and initiated the ERA-EDTA's highly successful Young Nephrologists' Platform, which involves younger members in all the activities of the Association”, while the CME courses he initiated go from strength to strength. It's hard to know where he finds the hours in the day, but that same sense of



See Editorial page 1918

Publication in „The Lancet” – my journey to Heidelberg in 1985

„In 1985, Andrzej Więcek made a journey that would change his life. Boarding the train in Katowice, the Polish city where he was born and raised, had trained in medicine and nephrology, and, at the age of 30, already had a wife and young family, Więcek set off for a year-long scholarship at the University of Heidelberg in what was then West Germany. The journey from Katowice was only about 1000 km, but for Więcek, who had never before set foot outside Soviet eastern Europe, it felt like he'd arrived on a different planet."

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See Editorial page 1918

Holmes D., Lancet, 2015, 385, 1937

This was the reality of all scientists from Central and Eastern Europe, who decided to travel to Western European courtiers for better education and research training

Publication in „The Lancet” – my journey to Heidelberg in 1985

In Katowice, thanks to the expert guidance and ingenuity of the renowned Polish nephrologist Franciszek Kokot, Więcek had access to techniques such as hormone assays that were unheard of elsewhere in eastern Europe, but research was still a struggle. “Even small details in the laboratory like tubes, cannulas, parafilm, everything was very limited, and we often had to reuse things many times that should have only been used once”, he recalls. In Heidelberg, under the stewardship of Eberhard Ritz, Więcek was trained in cutting-edge research methods at the university’s Department of Nephrology.

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Holmes D., Lancet, 2015, 385, 1937

The bad economic situation in Eastern European countries was the main reason which substantially limited our access to modern laboratory methods and equipment

Publication in „The Lancet” – my journey to Heidelberg in 1985

But the most important legacy of that time in Heidelberg, he says, are the good friends he made. “They are still good friends. We still collaborate a lot even 30 years later.”

This is also true for all who spent part of thier scientific life in the reseach centres abroad.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those whom I first met in Heidelberg over 30 years ago:

Prof. Eberhar Ritz, Prof. Johannes Mann, Professor Martin Zeier, Prof. Juergn Bommer, Prof. Kerstin Amann Prof. Danilo Fliser and also Dr. Maria Walla and Dr. Christina Ritz and others

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Schwetzingen, 2017

Holmes D., Lancet, 2015, 385, 1937

Research and education **behind the Iron Curtain**

- why they were so difficult to do

- Generally very poor economic situation.
- Lack of Western money – no possibility to buy modern laboratory equipments.
- Difficulties in travelling abroad – no passports at home - special reasons should be presented to the police station.
- In order to get a visa (needed to all Western countries) – a special invitation was requested.
- No access to the major medical journals from Western Europe or from USA (we sent personal letters to authors asking for reprints!).
- Communication difficulties – the official second language at school in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe was the Russian.
- Publication of our articles in Western medical journals was very difficult.
- **Individual scientific career was always under the control of the communist regime.**

Outline of the lecture: Integration of Eastern countries into the European renal community



- A bit of history
- Publication in „The Lancet”
- Role of Professor Eberhard Ritz

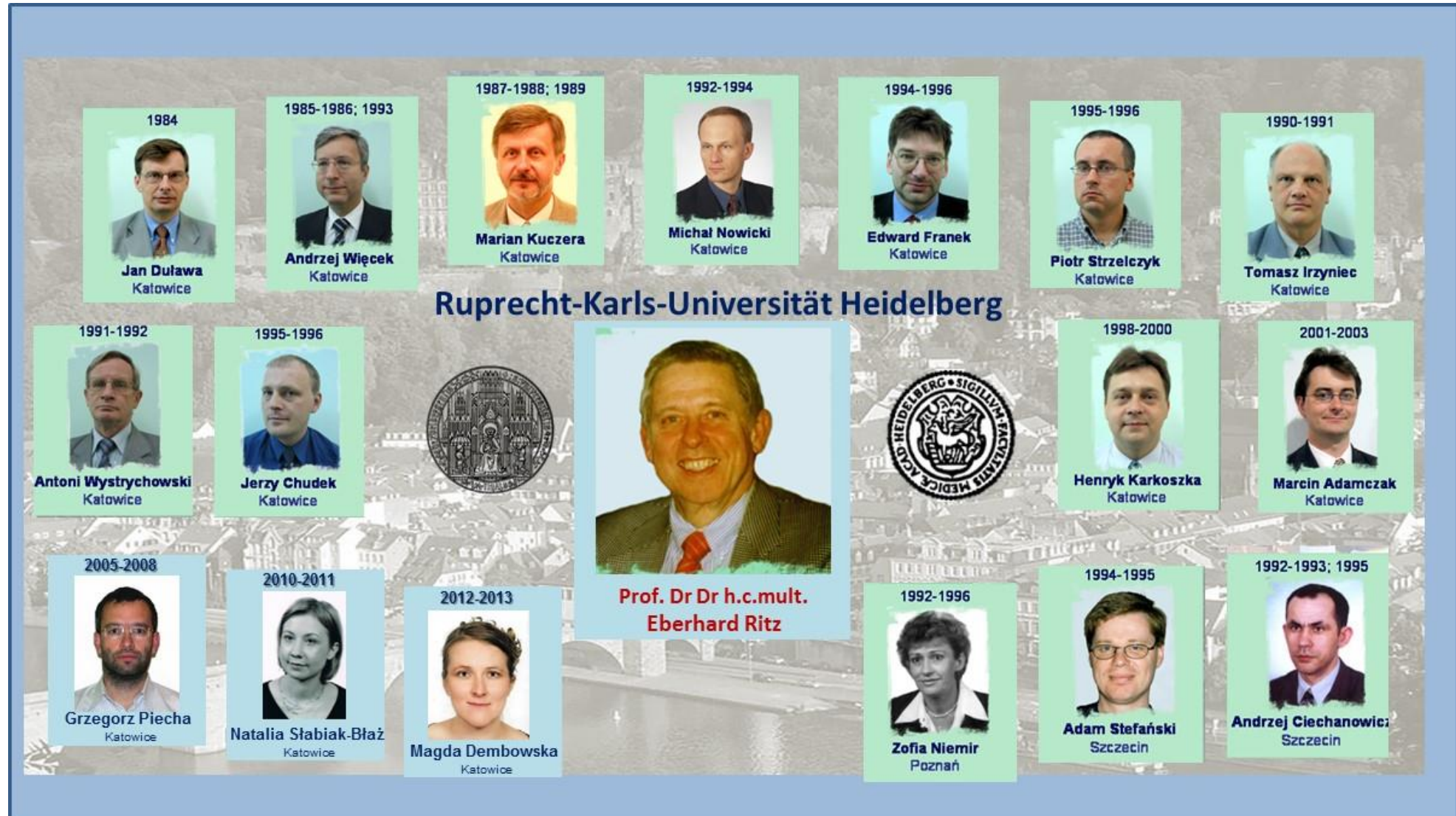
The role of Prof. Eberhard Ritz in supporting nephrologists from Central and Eastern Europe

- Prof. Eberhard Ritz was one of the first nephrologists in Western Europe who developed a permanent channel of scientific and educational support in nephrology for countries in Central and Eastern Europe many years before the political changes in these countries.
- In order to create support for these countries in such difficult circumstances, he had to show a very strong personality and great vision.
- His activity in this field not only contributed in the development of nephrology in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe but also significantly influenced the individual scientific careers of these people.

The role of Prof. Eberhard Ritz in supporting nephrologists from Central and Eastern Europe

- Many Fellows from Central and Eastern Europe spent their short or long-term fellowships in the Department of Nephrology and research laboratory in Heidelberg between 1984 to 2014.
- Prof. E. Ritz also invited each year to Heidelberg for his famous Seminars in Nephrology and Hypertension many young nephrologists from Central and Eastern European countries and organized a financial support for them.
- The first ERA-EDTA educational course was organized under his auspices (together with ISN) in Prague in 2001. This was the beginning of „Joint Action Eastern Europe“.
- Prof. E. Ritz has been also a speaker at numerous lectures in almost all countries of Central and Eastern Europe (often presenting his lectures in the local language!).

17 scholarship holders from Poland (Katowice, Poznań, Szczecin) in Heidelberg in the years 1984 – 2014



Fellows from other Central and Eastern European countries who were trained in Heidelberg

<u>Hungary:</u> Dr. P. Hamar Dr. G. Kökeny Dr. P. Liptak Dr. G. Milteny Dr. A. Szabo	<u>Czech Republic</u> Dr. I. Rychlik Dr. J. Krtil <u>Lithuania</u> Dr. A. Zamauskaite Dr. A. Simonaviciene	<u>Russia</u> Dr. T. Medvedova Dr. O. Fedorova <u>Romania</u> Dr. I. Kiss
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Nephrologists from Serbia invited by Prof. E. Ritz to Heidelberg for Seminar in Nephrology and Hypertension



First from the left: Dr. Anka Stanojčić from Belgrade - **2009**



2016

Prof. Eberhard Ritz – pioneer in the education in nephrology in Central and Eastern European countries

Nephrol Dial Transplant (1998) 13: 808

Congress Report

Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation

A new initiative of the Joint Action Nephrology Eastern Europe (International Society Nephrology, European Renal Association, Kuratorium Gesellschaft Nephrologie) in collaboration with the Czech Society of Nephrology

On May 17 and 18, 1997, under the local organization of Dr Rychlik (1st Department of Medicine, Charles University, Prague), a team of German nephrologists (Dr Bernd Krumme, Freiburg; Dr Markus Hollenbeck, Düsseldorf; and Dr Barbara Nonnast-Daniel, Dresden) conducted a workshop on 'Duplex Sonography—Its Use in Renal Patients' under the auspices of the 'Joint Action Nephrology in Eastern Europe'. Pursuing the

causes of renal dysfunction with disorders of the graft perfusion were discussed. Additionally, the value of new contrast agents for Doppler enhancement was critically analysed.

Pursuing the 'hands on' philosophy of this meeting, during the afternoon sessions in the practical part of the meeting, patients with arterio-venous fistula problems, with renal isograft, and with renal artery patho-

Nephrol. Dial. Transplant., 1998, 13, 808

1st Postgraduate Training Course

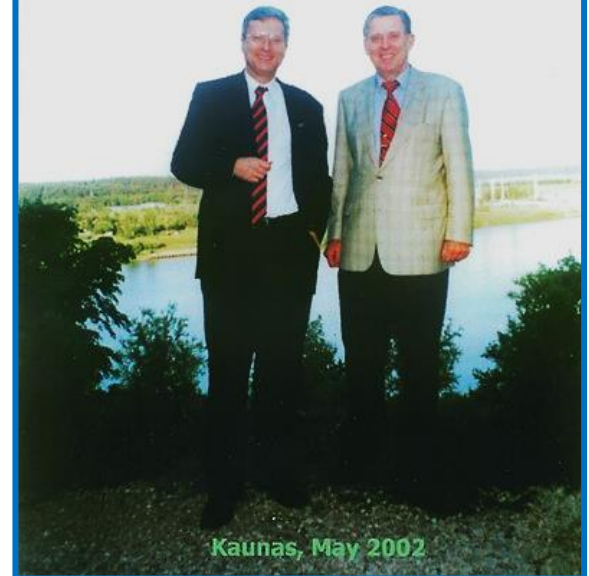
European Renal Association
Czech Society of Nephrology
Institute for Postgradual Education



Prague, January 22nd – 26th, 2001

Prague, Czech Rep., 2001

Joint Action Nephrology Eastern Europe




Kaunas, May 2002

Kaunas, Lithuania, 2002

Prof. Eberhard Ritz participated at the Prague Postgraduate Training Courses in Nephrology until the year 2014




**11th PRAGUE POSTGRADUATE
TRAINING COURSE IN NEPHROLOGY
PRAGUE 2011**

21. – 23. 1. 2011



21. – 23. 1. 2011

Local organizers: I. Rychlík, V. Teplan
Venue: Prague, Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine,
Videňská 1958/9, Prague 4, Czech Republic



**12th PRAGUE POSTGRADUATE
TRAINING COURSE IN NEPHROLOGY**
(NEPHROLOGY WINTER SCHOOL)
ERA-EDTA CME COURSE

**„New trends in the diagnostics and
treatment of glomerulonephritis“**

Organized by the Czech Society of Nephrology in collaboration
with ERA-EDTA Continual Medical Education Working Group



20. – 21. 1. 2012

Local organizers: Ivan Rychlík, Vladimír Tesař
Venue: Prague, Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine,
Videňská 1958/9, Prague 4, Czech Republic




13th Prague Postgraduate Training Course in Nephrology
(Nephrology Winter School)

ERA-EDTA CME Course
Together with a DESCARTES ERA-EDTA Transplantation working group course

“Modulation of immune response in renal disease“



Organized by the Czech Society of Nephrology
in collaboration with
ERA-EDTA Continual Medical Education Working Group



LOCAL ORGANIZERS: IVAN RYCHLÍK, VLADIMÍR TESAŘ, ONDŘEJ VIKLICKÝ

DATE: 25.–26.1.2013


Venue: Prague, Institute of Clinical and Experimental Medicine,
Videňská 1958/9, Prague 4, Czech Republic



14th Prague Postgraduate Training Course in Nephrology
(Nephrology Winter School)



ERA-EDTA CME Course
Humoral mediators and the kidney

Organized by the Czech Society of Nephrology
in collaboration with
ERA-EDTA Continual Medical Education Working Group



24. – 25. 1. 2014

Local organizers: Ivan Rychlík and Vladimír Tesař
Venue: Prague, Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine
Videňská 1958/9, Prague 4, Czech Republic



Meeting of three generations of Polish nephrologists with **Prof. Eberhard Ritz** in Katowice (Poland), November, 2014



From the left to the right:

Prof. Franciszek Kokot, Prof. Marcin Adamczak, Prof. Eberhard Ritz, Prof. Andrzej Więcek

Outline of the lecture: Integration of Eastern countries into the European renal community



- A bit of history
- Publication in „The Lancet”
- Role of Professor Eberhard Ritz
- Role of European Renal Association (former name ERA-EDTA)

Role of ERA-EDTA in the integration Eastern countries into the European renal community



- Before the political changes – a significantly reduced membership fee was offered to nephrologists from all countries of Central and Eastern Europe.
- Many travel grants and free registrations were offered for young nephrologists from these countries for ERA Congresses.
- Meetings with National Presidents (from Eastern and Western European countries) during the ERA Congresses.
- CME courses organized in Central and Eastern Europe with many speakers from Western European countries.
- Scholarship programmes for young scientists were organized (from Eastern European countries were sent to Western Europe).
- Candidates from Central and Eastern Europe were selected to the ERA-EDTA Council, Working Groups or Scientific Advisory Board.

Members from the Central and Eastern European countries in the ERA-EDTA Council



1. **Orłowski T.**, Poland, 1966
2. **Valek A.**, Czech Republic, 1967, 1980
3. **Berionade V.**, Romania, 1970
4. **Klinkmann H.**, (DDR), 1975, 1984, President 1987
5. **Kokot F.**, Poland, 1978, 1987, 1993
6. **Taraba I.**, Hungary, 1981
7. **Sonkodi S.**, Hungary, 1996
8. **Więcek A.**, Poland, 1999, 2006, Secretary-treasurer, 2011, President, 2014
9. **Nagy J.**, Hungary, 2000
10. **Covic A.**, Romania, 2003, Secretary-treasurer 2005,
11. **Spasovski G.**, North Macedonia, 2006, 2016
12. **Rychlik I.**, Czech Republic, 2008, Secretary-treasurer 2017
13. **Klinger M.**, Poland, 2010
14. **Tesar V.**, Czech Republic, 2011
15. **Małyszko J.**, Poland, 2015

Total number of ERA-EDTA Council Members: 153
Council Members from Central and Eastern Europe: 15 (9.8%)



**ERA-EDTA Congress
London, 2015**

Prof. Eberhard Ritz has been honoured by ERA-EDTA with many awards for his role in integrating Eastern countries into the European nephrology community



**Prof. E. Ritz received
ERA-EDTA Honorary Membership
(Istanbul, 2005)**



**Prof. E. Ritz received
the ERA-EDTA award
for education
(Prague, 2011)**



**Prof. E. Ritz received diploma
awarded by ERA-EDTA in
gratitude for his contribution
to the development of
nephrology in the countries
of Central and Eastern Europe
(Heidelberg, 2016)**



**Eberhard Ritz Award
for young investigators
in clinical science
(established in 2021)**

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- Publication in „The Lancet”
- Role of Professor Eberhard Ritz
- Role of European Renal Association (former name ERA-EDTA)
- Pioneers in nephrology who were involved in the integration of Eastern European countries into the European renal community

Pioneers in nephrology who were involved in the integration of Eastern European countries into the European renal community

Representatives from Western Europe:

- **Prof. Eberhard Ritz (Heidelberg, Germany)**
- Prof. Bruno Watschinger (Linz, Austria)
- Prof. August Heidland (Wuerzburg, Germany)
- Prof. Alexander (Sandy) M. Davison (Leeds, Ancrum, UK)
- Prof. Gerard London (who graduated from medical school of Charles University in Prague Czech Rep. in 1966, currently from France)
- and many others.....



Prof. Ritz



Prof. Watschinger



Prof. Heidland



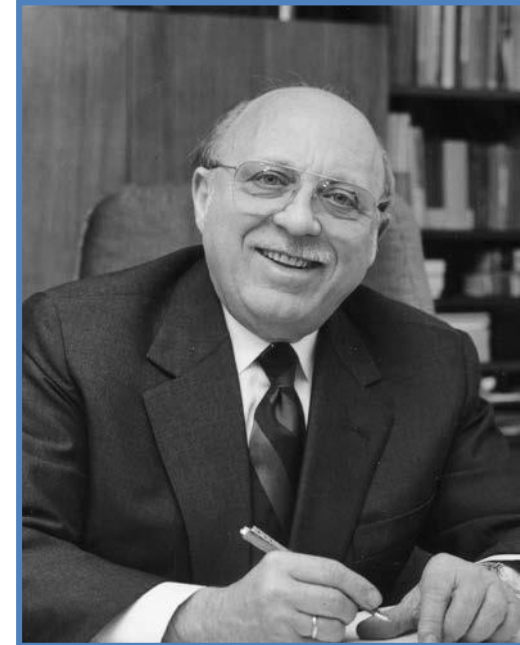
Prof. Davison



Prof. London

Prof. Bruno Watschinger (Linz, Austria)

- Prof. Bruno Watschinger was the founder in 1976 and the main organizer of the Danube Symposia of Nephrology with many participants from Central and Eastern Europe. One of these Symposia was organized in Kraków in 1996.
- The Danube Symposia of Nephrology were a unique opportunity for nephrologists from Central and Eastern Europe to meet their Western colleagues and as a substitute for the ERA-EDTA Congresses, which were very difficult for them to attend at the time.
- Prof. Bruno Watschinger was also the President of the ERA-EDTA Congresses in Vienna in 1973 and 1990.



**Prof. Bruno Watschinger
(1920 – 2017)**

Prof. Bruno Watschinger – In memoriam

„He considered it incomprehensible and unacceptable that during the cold war, when the „iron curtain" was dividing Europe in East and West, colleagues from the former Eastern European countries were excluded from scientific exchange with the West. This triggered his founding of the Danube Symposia of Nephrology. Already in 1976, owing to his personality and helped by the political neutrality of Austria, he was successful to invite colleagues from the East to attend the first Danube Symposium in Linz, Austria. This successful start was followed by many subsequent meetings alternating between western and eastern Danube countries. The whole Danube Symposium initiative is still considered by many as a crucial support for nephrological science in their home countries at the time.”

Rainer Oberbauer and Alexander M. Davison, ASN, 2017

IN MEMORIAM



Bruno Watschinger, MD

June 14, 1920 - June 28, 2017



Prof. August Heidland, Würzburg, Germany

- Since the late 1980s several young nephrologists from Poland, Slovakia and other Central and Eastern European countries have been trained in Würzburg.
- Prof. August Heidland often visited these countries (most frequently: Warsaw, Katowice, Gdańsk, Bratislava and others) as a speaker and teacher.



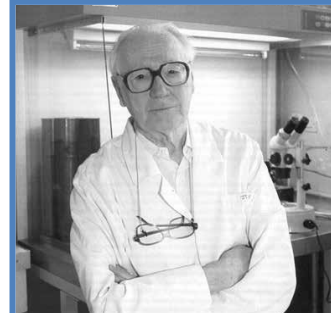
Prof. August Heidland

Pioneers in nephrology who were involved in the integration of Eastern European countries into the European renal community

Representatives from Central and Eastern Europe:

- **Prof. Franciszek Kokot (Katowice, Poland)** *founder Trilateral (PL, D, Cz), Nephrology Symposia - since 1994.*
- Prof. Tadeusz Orłowski (Warsaw, Poland) - *made the first contacts with Western nephrology - since 1950s.*
- Prof. Bolesław Rutkowski (Gdańsk, Poland) - *founder Baltic Nephrology Conferences – since 1995. Registry.*
- Prof. Miroslav Mydlik (Kosice, Slovakia) - *formed many personal contacts with Western nephrologists.*
- Prof. Laszlo Rosivall (Budapest, Hungary) - *founder of the Budapest Nephrology School - since 1994.*
- Prof. Momir Polenakovic (Skopje, North Macedonia) – *founded in 1993 BANTAO Association (Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs).*
- Prof. Albert Valek (Prague, Czech Rep.) - *organized first ERA-EDTA Congress in Central and Eastern Europe - in Prague in 1980.*
- and many others.....

Prof. F. Kokot
Prof. M. Mydlik
Prof. A. Valek



Prof. Orłowski



Prof. Rutkowski



Prof. Rosivall



Prof. Polenakovic

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- Pioneers in nephrology who were involved in the integration of Eastern European countries into the European renal community
- Future.....

The Young Nephrologists' Platform established by ERA connects
now young nephrologists from Eastern and Western Europe



The Young Nephrologists' Platform Board, Madrid, 2017

The Young Nephrologists' Platform currently connects young nephrologists from Eastern and Western Europe



- YNP was founded by ERA-EDTA in 2013 (this year YNP will celebrate its 10th anniversary during the ERA Congress in Milan).
- The future of the United European nephrology belongs to the young, which is why the Young Nephrologists' Platform is such a successful project with now close to 3000 members from all European countries and beyond.
- It is the duty of the older generation to remind the younger ones of difficult moments in the history that should never be repeated.

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- Future.....
- **Conclusions**

Conclusions:

- The way to integrate nephrology in Central and Eastern European countries with the rest of Europe was long and complicated.
- Political changes such as formation of „Solidarity” in 1980 and the first free elections in Poland in 1989 which ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall and destruction of the Iron Curtain, finally also allowed the nephrology of Central and Eastern European countries to be integrated with the rest of Europe.
- Prof. Eberhard Ritz was one of the first and certainly most active in supporting the integration of nephrologists from Central and Eastern Europe with the Western nephrology community but there were also many others (eg. Prof. Bruno Watschinger, Prof. Franciszek Kokot).
- Our future is the young generation of nephrologists and the success of the YNP (Young Nephrologists' Platform) initiated by ERA is one of our great hope.
- Only united nephrology (like united Europe) is strong enough to be recognized on a global scale.

Thank you very much to everyone who helped nephrologists from Central and Eastern Europe to join European nephrology - especially Prof. Eberhard Ritz



Dear Prof. E. Ritz: *Ad multos annos* & Cheers !!!



Nephrologisches Seminar Heidelberg

9-11. 03. 2023



Eberhard-Ritz-Lecture:

Thank you very much for your attention !

Andrzej Więcek

Department of Nephrology, Transplantation and Internal Medicine
Medical University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

e-mail: awiecek@sum.edu.pl