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Vienna, January 2016

Dear ÖGAI member!

First of all, we would like to seize this opportunity to wish you all the best for the New Year! This letter should, however, also be considered as a review of the past year, a chance to revisit the most important events of 2015 and to point out important dates and opportunities in the new year.

The past year was marked by crucial events. Many ÖGAI members as well as supporting members participated actively in the organization of the European Congress of Immunology (ECI 2015), which was held in the Austria Center Vienna from September 6 to 9, 2015. As a consequence we succeeded in hosting a scientifically attractive and socially successful congress with more than 3.600 delegates. We received highly positive feedback from numerous local as well as international colleagues that attended the congress. In addition, the supporting companies involved were very happy both with the focus of the congress as well as the number of visitors at the exhibits and the interest shown by the delegates. Thanks once more to all of those who participated and helped so admirably and enthusiastically in the ECI 2015 through their attendance and organizational help. Based on the feedback we received the ECI 2015 did a very good job of representing Austrian research in the areas of allergy and immunology at an international level and served the common cause pretty well. Please find a report of the ECI congress on our website and very soon also a large collection of pictures in the members rea of our website.

On September 9, 2015, the ÖGAI statutes were changed at the annual ÖGAI general assembly held within the framework of the ECI in Vienna. Please find the current ÖGAI statutes, which meanwhile were approved by the police department in charge of registered societies on our website. In addition, we are providing you with a list of the current executive board of the ÖGAI as well as a list of ÖGAI representatives in national and international committees.

On December 11 and 12, 2015 ÖGAI hosted the symposium ‘50-Years of B Lymphocytes’ at the College of Physicians in the Billrothhaus in Vienna. The idea behind this event was to foster and promote scientific exchange on a national level in the year 2015 on the one hand and also to show and highlight important scientific topics. It was a distinct pleasure and honor for the organizers to host professor Max D. Cooper, Atlanta, GA, discoverer of B cells, as symposium speaker in addition to the numerous high caliber national and international speakers.
Within the framework of the symposium, that was attended by 178 delegates in total, the ÖGAI prizes for young academics were awarded: Jennifer Jurkin, IMBA, Vienna, received the Karl Landsteiner Award, granted for outstanding work in the field of immunological research. Claudia Kitzmüller, Institute for Pathophysiology and Allergy Research, MUV, Vienna, received the Clemens von Pirquet Award, granted for outstanding work in the field of allergy research. Christoph Madritsch, Institute for Pathophysiology and Allergy Research, MUV, Vienna, received the Ursula and Fritz Melchers Thesis Award. Joanna Maria Warszawawska, Division of Infectious Biology, Department of Internal Medicine I, MUV, Vienna, received the ÖGAI Thesis Award. Marie Charlotte Brüggen, Department of Dermatology, MUV, Vienna, received the Stefan Wagner Thesis Award. We congratulate all winners on their outstanding performances!

Furthermore, two distinguished and internationally renowned scientists were acknowledged for their achievements as well as their support of Austrian research in the fields of allergy and immunology and their close contact to ÖGAI and its members. Professor Lorenzo Moretta, President of the European Federation of Immunological Societies (EFI), Department of Immunology, Bambino Gesù Hospital, Rome, Italy was awarded the Karl Landsteiner Medal, Professor Gabrielle Pauli, Department of Pneumology, Strasbourg University Hospitals, Strasbourg, France, was awarded the Clemens of Pirquet Medal.

See also report and fotos of the symposium on our website.

Of note, the year 2015 saw 11 events that were organized by ÖGAI itself or took place under the auspices of ÖGAI. A total of 51 points for continuing medical education (DFP-Punkte) of the Austrian Medical Chamber could be obtained by attending these events: April 10, 2015, Austrian Severe Asthma (ASA)-Net Meeting; April 10, 2015, Interactive Allergology Workshop; April 20, 2015, Pirquet Club; April 28, 2015, ‘Walk-in intestines’ (Begehbarer Darm); June 15, 2015, Pirquet Club; June 19 - 20, 2015, SIICA - International PhD Symposium; September 6 - 9, 2015, European Congress of Immunology, ECI 2015; October 3, 2015, ‘Nose meets lung’ (Nase trifft Lunge); October 5, 2015; Pirquet Club, December 11 - 12, 2015, ÖGAI-Symposium ’50-years of B lymphocytes’ with Allergy-Saturday; December 14, 2015, Pirquet Club. We will do our very best to also work out and prepare an attractive and versatile program for the year 2016 (please see below for details).

Please visit us at our website (www.oegai.org). Here you can find all information on past and future activities of the society, like events, travel awards, prizes as well as interesting links to national and international conferences and societies. Moreover, we would like to draw your attention to the brochure accompanying the exhibition ‘Emerging Immunology – Vienna’s Contribution’ and curated by Dr. Hans Eibl and Professor Othmar Förster, which you can browse through or download in high resolution from the ÖGAI web-site under “News”.
We take, in particular, the liberty of pointing out the numerous funding instruments of ÖGAI for the year 2016. Among them two attractive large prizes (Karl Landsteiner Prize and Clemens von Pirquet Prize, worth €3,000 each) as well as the three dissertation prizes (ÖGAI Dissertation prize, Ursula and Fritz Melchers Dissertation Prize for worth €1,500 each). The deadline for these prizes is June 30, 2016. Furthermore, we would like to draw your attention to the ÖGAI travel awards amounting to €500 each for attending international congresses where abstracts have been accepted (two deadlines: May 15, 2016 and November 15, 2016). All funding instruments have been established especially for sponsoring young scientists, please take note of the details of the tender requirements (see website).

We are also happy to announce that the new year will be marked by another European congress, that will be held under the auspices of ÖGAI. It is with pleasure that we inform you that the next European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology Congress (EAACI 2016) (www.eaaci2016.org) will take place in the ,Neue Messe, Vienna. This congress is being organized by the congress president Professor Barbara Bohle. Many of you are already actively and enthusiastically helping in the conceptual and detail planning of the congress for which we would like to express our gratitude to you!

With this letter we would like to kindly urge you to participate in large numbers and actively (submission of abstracts) in the EAACI 2016 Congress in Vienna. You may want to consider an active participation in the congress for yourself. Also, please offer as many members of your research as possible the opportunity to participate actively in the congress! Do please seize this unique chance to make a strong statement about Austrian allergy and immunology research on 'home territory'.

We would also like to draw your attention to a special Austrian ,high-light' which will take place within the framework of the EAACI 2016 Congress. The ,Clinical Village' organized by Professor Zsolt Szépfalusi. Achievements and skills in diagnostics and therapy of allergic and immunological diseases will be illustrated by means of numerous booths. Austrian experts in Allergology and Clinical Immunology will be available for delegates with their teams using 'hands-on' materials, videos, instruments and their personal expertise. Among others topics presented you will find ,skin tests', ,food provocation', ,pollen symptom diagnosis', ,pulmonary function testing', ,specific, molecular IgE diagnostics' as well as ,allergen-specific immunotherapy'. Starting in the fall of 2016 a touring exhibition through Austria is planned. The organizers under the leadership of Professor Zsolt Szépfalusi cordially invite you to visit the ,Village' and to contribute to it and they are already looking very much forward to welcoming you there!

Moreover, it is with great pleasure that we announce that the next ÖGAI annual conference will take place in Innsbruck from November 16 – 19, 2016. Dozentin Doris Wilflingseder and her colleagues will be organizing and hosting this meeting. We are already looking forward to a great event in the Tyrol and expect a large attendance. Within the framework of this meeting a new Executive Board of the ÖGAI will be elected. We will pass on additional information with regards to the election to you in due time.

We would also like to point out additional important ÖGAI events and dates for the year 2016:
February, 15 2016
(18:30 - 20:00)

Pirquet Club (2 DFP)

Library of the department of pediatrics, AKH Vienna
Währinger Gürtel 18 - 20, A-1090 Vienna (all Pirquet Clubs will take place at this venue)

April 4 - 10, 2016

World Allergy Week
(http://www.worldallergy.org/worldallergyweek/)

April 11, 2016
(18:30 - 20:00)

Pirquet Club (2 DFP)

April 29, 2016

EFIS Day of Immunology
(https://www.efis.org/public-outreach/day-of-immunology/index.html)

June 6, 2016
(18:30 - 20:00)

Pirquet Club (2 DFP)

June 11-15, 2016

EAACI Congress 2016 Vienna (24 DFP)
(http://www.eaaci2016.org/)

July 24 – 29, 2016

IgE and Allergy, 50 Years & Onward
West Palm Beach, FL, USA
(http://www.faseb.org/SRC-Microsite/IgE/Home.aspx)

August 21 - 26, 2016

International Congress of Immunology (ICI 2016) – IUIS
Melbourne, Australia http://ici2016.org/

October 2016
(18:30 - 20:00)

Pirquet Club (2 DFP)

exact date TBA

November 16 - 19, 2016

ÖGAI Annual Conference 2016 Innsbruck (18 DFP)

December 1 - 4, 2016

Conference of the Middle European Societies for Immunology and Allergology
Budapest, Hungary

December 2016
(18:30 - 20:00)

Pirquet Club (2 DFP)

exact date TBA
We thank all members who have already paid their annual ÖGAI membership fee. Payment via direct debit is the easiest way regarding administration and thus also the most cost effective. In case you haven’t yet arranged for direct debiting for payment of your annual fee, please feel free to fill in the attached form and return it to us. Should you use this method of payment you will receive a rebate of 5 Euro of your annual membership fee. In case you want to transfer the membership fee for 2016 – our IBAN is AT732011100003148246, ÖGAI-Giro.

Please also encourage your colleagues as well as young researchers to become members of ÖGAI. Membership enables you to apply for prizes and funding from ÖGAI, cheaper access to ÖGAI events and it also strengthens our society internationally as our influence on international organizations is dependent on number of members.

Please also participate actively in the World Allergy Week (WAW April 4-10, 2016 (http://www.worldallergy.org/worldallergyweek/)) and Day of Immunology (DoI April 29, 2016 (https://www.efis.org/public-outreach/day-of-immunology/index.html)) We encourage you to present your ideas and concepts in more detail. The aim is to familiarize decision-makers in science and politics as well as the public in general with the importance of our specialities. Please send your suggestions to the ÖGAI office (office@oegai.org).

We would like to thank you very much indeed for your interest, which you show towards the important topics in the specialized field of allergology/immunology and hope that we can count on your active support also in the future.

Please let us have your suggestions and ideas, which we will be happy to take up.

With best regards,

Prof. Dr. Winfried Pickl
President
e-signed

Prof. Dr. Rudolf Valenta,
Secretary General
e-signed