

30 years IMAB, 30 years going strong!

Dear friends of IMAB around the World,

On 8 May 2020 we planned to celebrate the unique 30 years Jubilee of our dear child IMAB, the International Medical Association Bulgaria, with organization of the **30-th Annual Assembly of IMAB** in Varna, Bulgaria.

However, as the Corona virus pandemics blocked the entire World, we also had to take a sad decision to postpone the 30-th Jubilee Assembly of IMAB and to move it to 18-21 October 2020, again in the Congress center of Hotel Admiral, Resort Golden Sands, near Varna.

There is no future for anyone who does not respect the history– this ancient Roman truth says everything for such situations.

Therefore, please, allow me to take a historical look behind and to refresh your memories 30 years back into the calendar.

A group of several enthusiasts gathered in February 1990, expressing their wish to establish a mutual organization to serve as a bridge between Bulgarian medical people from the Motherland and those Bulgarians, living abroad.

By that time, just 3 months after the Berlin Wall broke down, we deadly needed open doors to the democratic World, and the easiest way was to try to find contacts with our nationals in foreign countries.

These enthusiasts were: **Spasimir Nikolov, Margarita Ruseva, Ivan Ivanov, Deyan Hristov, Ivan Galabov, Krassimir Metodiev, Feodor Protopopov, Boris Kornovski, George Kyuchukov (all from Bulgaria), Lili Levy (Israel), George Wassilew (Germany), Kapriel Kaprelyan (Germany), Virginia Lepage (France), Nava Niv-Vogel (USA), Atanas Shishkov (Moldova), Momo Polenakovic (Macedonia), Vladimir Krcmery (Slovakia).**

For a pity and to our deep sorrow, several colleagues of this group **are not any more with us**, and we pay warm memories, condolence and homage to their bright destiny: **Spasimir Nikolov, Margarita Ruseva, Ivan Ivanov, Deyan Hristov, Ivan Galabov. May God be with them on the Heaven!!!**

The idea for the new organization and the name IMAB came from Krassimir Metodiev, who took over the entire administrative, scientific and logistic activities and leadership from the very beginning until today, already 30 years.

IMAB was legally registered in Varna City Court in April 1990 as a nongovernment civil organization and the first Annual Assembly was

planned and realized in Varna, 8-11 May 1990, in the Main Auditorium of the Inst. Hygiene and Epidemiology, affiliated to the Medical University.

This First Assembly included a scientific session with oral and poster sessions, cultural events and get-together with all participants (by that time, together with the cited above colleagues, the first forum of IMAB gathered about 100 medical and dental doctors, biologists, pharmacists, health managers.

The enthusiasm was expressed, the high interest from Bulgarian and foreign colleagues and friends of IMAB allowed to expand the activities and the Annual Assembly of IMAB had been organized every consequent year, always in May, from 1990 until 2020, for a period of 30 years.

New and new friends of IMAB gathered and joined the big family of IMAB and by today we have thousands of like-minded friends, members of IMAB, from different nationalities, different countries on all 5 continents.

Little by little we expanded the annual meetings, moving the Assembly in the International House of Scientists “F. J. Curie”, and after that and until now in the Congress Center of Hotel Admiral, Resort Golden Sands.

IMAB has a number of activities, in addition to the Annual Assembly:

- Over 150 full long stipends-fellowships (up to 1, 2, 3 years) were provided to young Bulgarian medical and biologic specialists to qualify in leading medical centers in Israel (Hadassah-Jerusalem, Sheba-Tel Aviv, Rambam-Haifa), Germany (Munich University), Norway (Radium hospital), Italy (Florence University), Slovakia (Bratislava University), USA (Boston Medical Center), Austria (Vienna University hospital).
- A number of serious donations to the hospitals in Varna, Veliko Tarnovo, Bourgas, Rousse (medical equipment, instruments, medicines, accessories, transport vehicles, etc.) were realized through our partners abroad.
- Over 60 patients with problematic health conditions had been sent to the leading hospitals in Israel for better medical service.
- A number of guest-professors from Israel, Germany, Italy, USA, Norway, etc. had been invited to present their expertise in workshops and practical seminars in Varna.

The accent of all meetings was and is the Annual Assembly of IMAB which for the recent 10 years includes the Annual Meeting of the Alumni Club of the Medical University of Varna. The new Chair of Alumni is Mario Milkov, who took over the responsibility from Krassimir Metodiev in 2019.

Thus, for example, the 20-th Jubilee Assembly of IMAB, together with the 1-st South-East European Conference of infections and cancer (SEECIC, initiated and founded by the idea of Krassimir Metodiev) gathered in Varna in May 2010 **over 700 participants from 72 countries from all 5 continents**, a national

record for most active scientific medical forum for the entire history of congresses and symposia in Bulgaria.

The main partner of all activities of IMAB was and is the Medical University of Varna and its great support must be highly evaluated, especially during the two terms of our recent **Rector Krasimir Ivanov** (2012-2020), who was and is one of the best friends of IMAB.

One of the most important initiatives, a joint forum of IMAB and Varna Medical University was the Annual Workshop on natural disasters and terrorism, starting from 2013 until now.

This forum includes top-level experts from Israel, NATO and partner-countries and is a main source for education and practical tool for such dramatic situations in Bulgaria, also as a part of the curriculum of pre-graduated medical students.

IMAB was the host of the First for Bulgaria NATO Workshop on Bioterrorism, organized in 2003 in Varna with the initiative of Krassimir Metodiev, Director of this Workshop under the guidelines of the Scientific Affairs' Division of NATO, thus opening soon after that the door of Bulgaria's NATO membership. Over 45 distinguished experts from all NATO member-countries have their know-how during 4 working days in Varna.

One other, but **very important activity of IMAB is the Journal of IMAB**, which exists from the very start of the Association, giving a possibility for publishing of articles of medical colleagues in English.

Nowadays, the Journal has a very high position among the medical journals world-wide and we give our full complement to the Editor-in-chief, Krassimir Metodiev, and the Publisher of the Journal of IMAB, Mr. Gospodin Peytchinski, for their never-ending energy, motivation and impact.

As IMAB is the main partner of the Alumni Club of Varna Medical University, we also need to express our deep appreciation for the cooperation with this big family of medical people, graduates and friends of Alma Mater.

We, the founders and friends of IMAB around the World are happy to welcome every colleague from every location on the Planet, motivated and accepting the global idea for **GET TOGETHER!!!**

Happy Jubilee, dear friends and members of the big family of IMAB.