

Dear Friend,

Ljubljana, 19.12.2012

Another year has gone to archives of our lives. Many of us had chance to meet and to enjoy each other company and friendships. This will stay in our hearts for ever. But there are also some material outcomes we can see as a result of our activities in the past year. We can be proud and happy that we are still able to manage both sides, spiritual and material, and hopefully we will continue that way.

Extensive work was put to knowledge dissemination in the country but also abroad. The EU project »Vocational excellence ensuring food product safety, consumer protection and competitiveness in Western Balkans« continued from Serbia to Macedonia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina to finish with great success in November in Belgrade. Selection of food related professionals from the area finished HACCP School and acquired relevant knowledge to handle food issues in their practice. Second project in the same area of interest we finished within EU-US Atlantis programme. Cooperation in Higher Education and Vocational Training was finished in Romania during first half of July organised by prof. Borda. Outcome based on comparison of various educational practices gave us good tool for improvements of our educational programs. Also we are involved in IMPULSE which has been continued with activities in Brest in France with Traditional Food in combating Food-borne pathogens and CEPUS which involved us in Vienna and Zagreb. On top of it there are regular cooperation with University of Vienna, University of Maribor and already traditional BOKU. We should be grateful to our jobs for this opportunity of excellent experience with students and teachers.

Research lined further activities on European research projects like DREAM where we contributed on preparatory activities in Budapest and Montpellier for next year finalisation of the project. Partially dissemination went on already at International food, agricultural and gastronomy congress in Antalya in February and at IUFOST congress in Iguazu in August. Preparatory activities within FOODSEG commenced in Berlin in June and continued in Prague in October. However, we have to mention SAFEFOODERA under which umbrella we finished in September the project »Preservation and standardisation of traditional technologies of fermented milk products based on autochthonous lactic acid bacteria« where we got established nice frame among Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia and harvested numerous strains for further research and development. Majority of the projects still go we look forward for good outcomes. Professor Topisirović did good job with all of us involved.

Regarding our activities at scientific conferences I could stress a few of them, mainly connected to celebrations, however we also contributed to other events. Our participation at Yeast conference in May with the lecture entitled "Biodiversity, biotechnology, biosafety of industrial yeasts *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*: can we handle all issues?" marking 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of yeast meetings in Smolenice castle traditional Yeasts Commission. The second such important meeting was CEFOOD in the middle Europe which was in May in Novi Sad organised by professor Nedović and Lević. A reflection on CEFOOD congresses contribution on occasion of 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary was addressed through the lecture "Food and technology, nutrition and wellbeing, from past to the future".

Beside this it is worthwhile to mention few professional meetings, in October in Belgrade at 12<sup>th</sup> congress on Nutrition with the lecture "The role of Ethics in Food Safety and Quality" organised by prof. Sobajić and Obradović. In Radenci, in November at 4<sup>th</sup> Banic days, organised by professor Petrovec in Štrumbelj, the lecture entitled: "Food safety between Scylla and Charybdis - between European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) and consumer" was given.

Regarding building capacities on global level, UNIDO International Centre for Science and High Technology is highly appreciated to invite me as Vice president of COST DC in March in Trieste meeting for lecture about "New types of foods from EU programs for the food agro industry" organised by dr. Mezzetti. Additionally to this, regional meeting in Skopje took place in September where I addressed medical community with lecture "Biosafety of yeasts: Can we handle all issues?", not to mention Slovenian forum in February about food supply where I addressed more than 400 participants with contribution "Domestic food - safe food" organised by Ekoci and Slovenian Forum. Along these lines we can found also Opening of COST meeting in Cesena in March organised by dr. Dupont, participation in round table at KEN meeting in Maribor organised by dr. Cizelj and ICPE meeting, recognising the day of Africa in May in Ljubljana by dr. Podobnik.

As a president of Slovenian society for microbiology I have to mention two important events. One is that the journal Food Technology and Biotechnology, during the celebration of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Zagreb, presented to our society the plaque of recognition for long lasting cooperation which was handed to our society by editor in chief prof. Mrša. The second one is welcome day for young microbiologists we organised in November for the first time and it was found very appropriate in this difficult economic situation, coined by our young colleagues Maša Vodovnik and Nataša Kočar.

Direct communication to Slovenian citizens was not ignored. For that reason I gave few interviews in journals on TV and radio. Worthwhile to mention is the interview in March in Programme ARS in the emission "Faces of knowledge" where Mr. Kutoš streamed me to think about our research challenges in the area of food and nutrition. And SLO TV emission about additives in food, by Mrs. Jakšič in April.

Eleventh meeting of the Network on the Knowledge Based Bio-Economy (KBBE-Net) in Brussels in March was special since we decided to terminate our committee. One would say that this is a bit unusual. But we all understood this as a positive sign to stop administration which is not essential for well stream development in the area of biotechnology.

For sure also current management in European commission has credit for this achievement with the director of research Mrs. Rute who positively worked on this issue.

European declaration ambassadors continued with their activities in Turkey in February at International Food, Agriculture and Gastronomy Congress together with prof. Fatih Yildiz and in Serbia in Novi Sad in May at Central European Food Congress, together with ECPD European Centre of Peace and Development, together with prof. Viktor Nedović and dr. Negoslav Ostojić as well as at 16<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Food Science and Technology and XVII Latin American Seminar of Food Science and Technology - ALACCTA, August, Foz do Iguacu, Paraná – Brazil, together with prof. Glauca Maria Pastore. The idea is growing well and new partners are entering to this network.

Pedagogically was reelected to run microbiology collegium which stays focused on microbiological activities with very complex structure since we are deeply integrated to some departments at Biotechnical Faculty and to Medical Faculty as well. Additional to this, it is complicated to conduct the chair since we are involved in four study programs and staff is involved in 20 projects and one program group. One could easily see that I still have also duties in Program committee of FW7 in Brussels, vice presidency of COST, evaluation bodies in Research but also in pedagogical area and some other duties in Slovenian Government. However, in spite of this, I try to illustrate you that last year was in our group reasonable productive. We published 15 papers in journals with IF, and 32 monographic publications in books among 138 items registered in database for 2012. We employed new young researcher Katja Bezek as the first finished master microbiology study after Bologna reform. At the same time Ana Mavri and Martina Avbelj finished their works and there are about to defend their PhD theses. But also we are happy that dr. Bojan Butinar completed his thesis in the area of pumpkin seed oil. We are happy that we had guests in our laboratory from Portugal prof. Dorit Schuller, from South Africa prof. Olga de Smith, and many students Sandra Prasch from Austria, Bohdanka Janštova, Hana Šuranska and Petra Doušova from Czech Republic, Karoline Fürst from Germany, Ewa Gadzinska and Dominika Toporek from Poland, Radovan Đorđević, Zorica Tomićić, Ružica Tomićić, but also our students worked abroad, in Austria, USA, Portugal, Spain...

In a way this year was dense with events and outcomes. Not to exceed usual size of this writing to you I will I briefly mention some of the issues, although you would give them different weight and distribution. Among main events at home I would point out the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our chair. This event gathered in September 165 participants from Slovenia and our friendly universities from Austria, Croatia, Serbia, Romania and main institutions in Slovenia. In particular, we are proud to reunite the best of the best in our chairs network. Not only had many distinguished professors, but also our ex students who are now on important positions in the country and abroad. In this economically difficult time for universities it was really refreshing to deliver two books and two days meeting, one international day and one Slovenian day. Memories have real value as they allow us a link to the time when we had done something or something had happened. In the last twenty years, quite a lot had happened. We were able to write down part of this on 640 pages and dr Paš did a lot of editing in Slovenian publication. In 46 chapters the achievements were clustered on selection of the successful implementation of ideas, activities and challenges and educational successes of the Chair of Biotechnology, Microbiology and Food Safety. The second publication was prepared in English together with prof. Smole Možina. In 36 chapters on 440 pages we demonstrated mainly our research, but we did not ignore education since we are in principle teachers.

They were also other issues, which would be worthily to mention in particularly in scientific part of our work and activities as well as auditing at different universities, or chairing commission and also dealing with daily concerns in our group which counts currently for 22 people. Beside this I completed 40 years of work and according to current rules I should be retired, but University asked me to continue my service for additional year. Maybe is proper also to mention that I become member of Academia Europea and I look forward to act in this dimension.

In my "other" life I am still active in Rotary club Ljubljana Center. This year we conducted already 5<sup>th</sup> St. Martin's Days. The participants were happy with the culture but also wine from Brda region and traditional foods. Worthily to mention is that one of our members, my friend from primary school Mr. Zdravko Perger, opera singer finished his 40 years engagement with Ljubljana Opera and we escorted his performance of George Germont in Traviata as culmination in the Opera house with special reception.

But, let's be enough for this year. I can not put it all in this letter anyway. But I have to mention my family, Tatjana, Petra and Sara. Petra married in September. Sara finished gymnasium and just started to go to Veterinary Faculty and Tatjana is taking care about all essential issues.

Time is around us and within us. The sound of time is stillness. Let's take a brake for a moment to enjoy time in the inner circle.

I wish you all the best in next 365 days in year 2013 personally, but also in the name of our group.

With session greetings

