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ECR prepares to move from Vienna in 2002 and 2003

By Tim Wesley

ECR will stay in Vienna next year, but in 2002 and 2003 a change of venue is planned. A final decision on alternatives has yet to be taken.

"Whether it will be Barcelona or Brussels remains open for the moment. As you can imagine, it is not easy to find a suitable venue for such a big conference at short notice," ECR 2000 President Prof. Dr. Rolf W. Guenther told delegates at the opening ceremony of what is in effect the first annual congress.

He stressed that recent political events in Austria should have no bearing on the decision to look for an alternative location.

"A change of congress venue has been under discussion for a long time – long before the current political developments," he said. "The ECR is a non-political scientific organisation. We are committed to liberty and democracy, and abhor discrimination of any kind."

The timing and duration of ECR will change from next year. Mindful of the economic situation facing delegates, the organisers have decided to shorten the length of the event by half a day, and to hold it

between Friday and Tuesday. This will enable more participants to take advantage of lower airfares.

Guenther said the switch from a biennial to an annual congress had been driven in part by the rapid pace of change in both knowledge and technological developments, which required a forum for timely communication and discussion. The increasing importance of the European Union in the areas of politics, economics, and science was another factor.

The impact of the EU was also acknowledged by Prof. Dr. Roberto Passariello, President of the European Association of Radiology (EAR), who noted the growing demand for the development of harmonised European guidelines governing the radiological profession. Calls for the standardisation of training and education programmes in individual countries were also increasing. "The best way to achieve such harmonisation is through ECR," he said.

Passariello said the organisers had already guaranteed the success of ECR 2000 by providing a high-quality scientific



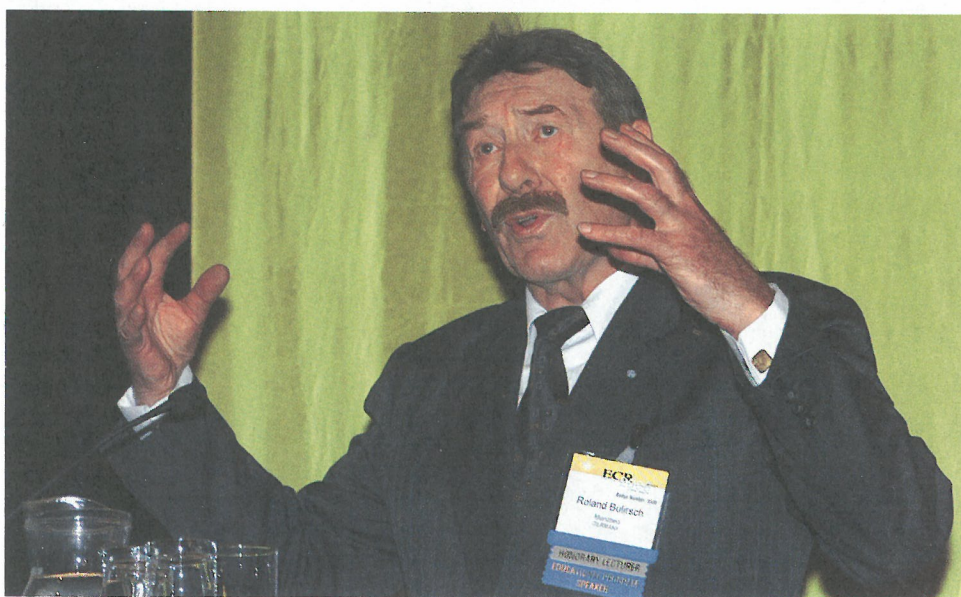
Armed with their distinctive yellow bags, thousands of delegates arrived at the Austria Center Vienna on Sunday for the official opening day of ECR 2000.

and technical programme. This, in turn, had attracted an impressive number of delegates from all over the world, he noted.

"Everything has been well prepared for you," concluded Guenther. "So enjoy the week of outstanding educational, scientific, and cultural events in a city renowned for

its great music, magnificent art, fine cuisine, hospitality, and – last but not least – ECR."

*** For an extended interview with Prof. Dr. Guenther about his vision of the future of European radiology, please turn to page 4.**



Prof. Roland Bulirsch

Radiology urged to look beyond its narrow confines

Further encouragement for radiologists to look beyond the narrow confines of its own specialist area was given during the guest lecture at Sunday's opening ceremony. Addressing the symbiotic nature of the relationship between science and art, Prof. Roland Bulirsch from Munich urged the profession to take a broad outlook.

In a departure from previous opening ceremonies, he mixed slides of classical art with computer-generated images. He illustrated how artists have been inspired by science, and how science, through the application of mathematical equations, can produce stunning visual images.

Radiological imaging is just a part of the process whereby new ideas produce novel images, and novel images in turn spawn new ideas, he said. With the pace of technological change continuing to increase, there will clearly be many future opportunities for the profession to use imaging techniques to generate new ideas for the benefit of both clients and patients. In short, Bulirsch intimated that radiology has the chance to embrace visualisation, rather than to simply perform high-quality medical imaging.

He concluded his passionate and absorbing guest lecture with a graphic depiction of the birth, life, and death of the sun. On the positive side, mathematicians have calculated that the sun will support life on earth for another billion years, noted Bulirsch. This is most definitely a comforting and reassuring thought for European Congress of Radiology delegates to carry around with them during the next five days of the conference and to take home to their hospitals.

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