

The Institute of Molecular Genetics of the Czech Academy of Sciences celebrated its 60th anniversary

On Thursday, May 26 and Friday, May 27, 2022, the Institute of Molecular Genetics of the Czech Academy of Sciences (IMG) celebrated its 60th anniversary. The anniversary celebrations were combined with a two-day annual conference and a rich accompanying programme.

The history of IMG stems from the Department of Experimental Biology and Genetics of the Institute of Biology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, whose head since 1953 had been Milan Hašek, co-discoverer of immunological tolerance. Based on this Department, in 1962, the Institute of Experimental Biology and Genetics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (ÚEBG) was founded, with Milan Hašek as director until 1970.

In 1976, IEBG was merged with several biochemical laboratories of the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry and renamed the Institute of Molecular Genetics of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (IMG). Josef Říman (later long-standing President of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences) became the Director of IMG and remained so until 1991. Since then, molecular biology has become the main topic of the Institute; however, earlier traditional fields of research (immunogenetics, retrovirology, tumour immunology) have continued, but progressively have also passed to the molecular level. Significant successes from the otherwise difficult 1970s and 1980s include the co-discovery of reverse transcriptase (Josef Říman), discovery of virogeny (Jan Svoboda) and sequencing of one of the first viral genomes (Václav Pačes).

After 1989, the trend of strengthening molecular biological approaches to solving traditional and newly introduced issues continued at the Institute. The Institute was headed by Jan Svoboda (1991-1999) and then Václav Pačes (1999-2005). In 2004, construction of a new Institute building started on the campus of Academy institutes in Prague-Krč, and after its completion in early 2007, the vast majority of IMG staff, so far divided into several sites, have finally and for the first time in history found a common residence. After the election of V. Pačes as the President of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Václav Hořejší became the Director in 2005.

In 2015, a new building of the BIOCEV centre was completed in Vestec near Prague and fully equipped, housing several IMG research groups and the Czech Centre for Phenogenomics since 2016. At the same time, another two research infrastructures, CZ-OPENSREEN and Czech-BioImaging, hosted in the Krč part of IMG, started to operate. In May 2017, Petr Dráber became the IMG Director. At that time, the Institute included a central part on the Krč campus and three detached sites, one in Vestec (within the BIOCEV project), one in Prague - Dejvice and one in Koleč.

The celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Institute, connected with presentation of the current results of IMG research groups, culminated in a lecture by Václav Pačes on the history and development of the Academy of Sciences and IMG. In association with the significant jubilee of V. Pačes and in honour of his work as the head of the IMG and the Czech Academy of Sciences, a new

tree was planted next to the main IMG building. In the end, a small surprise awaited all IMG employees in the form of a gift mug with thematic graphics for the 60th anniversary.

Complete photo gallery for browsing - <https://owncloud.cesnet.cz/index.php/s/qntubHVnzJ00n7U#/>



A gift mug for the 60th anniversary of the IMG, which was received by all employees.



IMG Director Petr Dráber, during his lecture summarizing the events of the past two years.



The current IMG Director Petr Dráber (right) and two former directors of IMG, Václav Pačes (middle) and Václav Hořejší (left), at a toast to the ceremonial unveiling of the memorial tree of Václav Pačes.



Memorial tree of V. Pačes, which was unveiled on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of IMG.



Plaque of the memorial tree of Václav Pačes.