



Vienna, January 2013

**Univ. Prof. Dr. Josef Söltz-Szöts †**

**19.7.1930 – 7.1.2013**

On behalf of the Austrian Society for STD and Dermatological Microbiology it is our sad duty to inform you that our highly esteemed colleague and friend Professor Josef (Pepi) Söltz-Szöts died last Monday, Jan 7<sup>th</sup> 2013, in Slovenia during his holidays in his beloved city of Bled. We express our deep sympathy to his family!

Professor Josef Söltz-Szöts was born in 1930 in Vienna into an aristocratic Austro-Hungarian family. "Pepi" as he wanted to be called by his friends, graduated from Gymnasium in 1948 and studied medicine at the University of Vienna where he obtained his degree in 1955. After finishing his residency training in dermatology and internal medicine, he became member of the medical university staff at the Department of Dermatology II at the University of Vienna in 1957 and head physician in 1960.

Already at a very young age, his scientific accomplishments in the field of infectious dermatovenereological diseases were awarded with the Cardinal Innitzer Prize in 1964 and he received the *Venia Legendi* for Dermatology and Venereology one year later. In 1975 he became the head of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research of Infectious Venero-Dermatological Diseases. His research in the areas of HSV and chlamydia infections, syphilis, and gonorrhoea made a strong impact on clinical practice across Austria and beyond. In 1976 he became Head of the Department for Dermatovenereology of the Hospital Rudolfstiftung in Vienna and educated a whole generation of young dermatovenereologists. As the chief of the department Josef Söltz-Szöts was a competent and compassionate teacher, full of respect for the young as well as for the senior doctors working with him. In 1991 he was awarded the gold medal for Scientific Performances of the City of Vienna reflecting his scientific achievement with over 150 scientific publications in the area of Infectious Skin Diseases and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. He was a leading figure promoting the interest for venereology and established the Study Group for STIs in the Austrian Society for Dermatology and Venereology.

Josef Söltz-Szöts was not only a dedicated scientist but also a gentleman, a noble person, open minded with a high level of cross-cultural understanding and tolerance for his national and international collaborators. This mindset and his love for the Alpe Danube Adriatic region i.e. the countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, led him to initiate together with Prof. Kinsky and Prof. Potocnik from Slovenia and Prof. Drzdzakova from Czech Republic the creation of the Alpe-Danube-Adria Society for STD and Skin Infections in 1994 an endeavor which was quickly joined by representatives from many other neighbouring countries. Through the 18 meetings held since, the society has promoted both a highly scientific exchange of experience and knowledge in the field of sexually transmitted infections, and a longlasting friendship between its members. The last conference, where Pepi participated with enthusiasm was held in 2012 in Bled. Besides his career in medicine and science, Pepi Söltz-Szöts had an extraordinary sense for culture and arts and many of us shared his special interest and knowledge in music and operas. This unique combination of attitudes in medicine and in his private life characterized him as a unique personality with substantial influence on Austrian Dermatovenereology and he touched many lives in and outside of Austria. As a friend he was a loyal and supportive advisor and a good companion with a great sense of humor- his life and work serves as an example to all of us as to what can be achieved through creativity, perseverance and effort.

The Austrian Society for Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Dermatological Microbiology is deeply grateful to Josef Söltz-Szöts for his support as a mentor, as a teacher, and as a friend, and will keep him in the best memory.

Angelika Stary, Claudia Heller-Vitouch, Erwin Tschachler, Georg Stingl