

# žurnál

Magazine of Palacký University Olomouc, 2017/1

theme

## Olomouc – A University Town



Palacký University  
Olomouc

*Genius loci...*



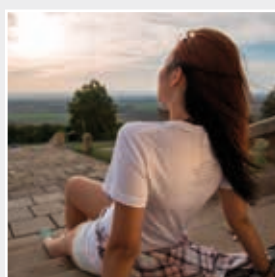
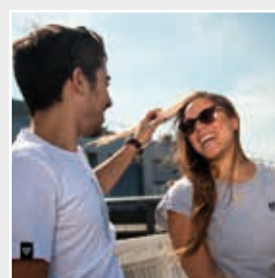
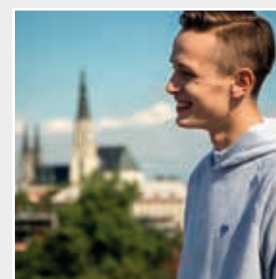
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cover photo: Gabriela Knýblová

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Dear Readers,

Anniversaries are always sources of joy and pride. Established in 1566 as a Jesuit college and re-established in 1946 as Palacký University, in 2016 our academy celebrated four hundred and fifty years of its existence and seven decades since its renewal. Over the course of centuries, legions of alumni have spread its glory and reputation across the globe. To celebrate our rich and dramatic history, we invited our alumni back to Olomouc, and I hasten to say that the splendid and pleasantly informal 2016 Reunion will be writ in gold into the university chronicle. With 70 honoured alumni and almost 10 000 participants from the Czech Republic, Europe and overseas, the event certainly aspired to the biggest academic get-together in the history of this country. This new English version of *Žurnál* recalls this memorable happening, one that may justly be called the highlight of the academic year. This issue offers interviews with selected renowned alumni, inspiring life stories of some Palacký University graduates, reports on recent research achievements of our scientists, the first-hand impressions from Olomouc as voiced by the sole Bhutanese student in the Czech Republic, and much more. Long live Palacký University and its ever-growing alumni club!

Jaroslav Miller  
UP Rector



theme

text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová





# A university town

They came. Up until the last minute, we worried about whether they would make it. But they came. The town was full of them. Old, young, locals, out-of-towners, famous sons and daughters. Everywhere. And everywhere they went, they could be recognised at first glance. By the blue lanyard around their necks and the smiles on their faces. Palacký University alumni.

September ninth and tenth last autumn, Olomouc belonged to the university. More precisely, to the Alumni Reunion, the like of which Olomouc has never seen. For two days, fellow students, teachers, employees, and friends met. Everyone who has UP not only on their parchments, but also in their hearts. They came to see how their colleges have changed. "I finished my studies in optics and electronic optics at the Faculty of Science in 1994. I'm glad to be here. They have a marvellous building which did not exist in my day," said Helena Indrušová, who came from Slovakia. "I wanted to walk through the halls where I studied. Especially the Anatomy Department, where I can still smell the formaldehyde," Milena Moravcová, a dentist and 1976 graduate, said with a smile.

There were many similar meetings and many were filled with surprising and touching moments. For example when graduate Jindřich Štreit christened the university desk calendar, and several ladies descended upon the famous photographer saying, "We studied together, Jindřich, remember? Let's get a shot of us together, ok?" Or when Jitka Pospíšilová from Hranice, a 1965 graduate in English and Russian from the Faculty of Arts, somewhat involuntarily touched the ring on her hand. "For me Palacký University even has a family significance. My parents made financial contributions to its re-establishment after WW2. And that's why I wore this ring, which was my mum's, so that she could be here with me – symbolically." And distance was no obstacle for those who wanted to return to their student days. Miloslava Minnes, a graduate of both the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Arts, flew in from Canada. "I wanted to be back in Olomouc, it's lovely here."

Delana Mikolášová, a top diplomat (you can read an interview with her in this issue), flew in from Israel.

Everything which took place during those two days was "Made in UP", including the programme. Anyone who wanted to hear the proof of how well UP graduates can play and sing could listen to the likes of musical star Leona Machálková, folk musician Jiří Pavlica, opera singer Lucie Ceralová, and jazzman Emil Viklický live in concert.

And they were honoured. Six dozen personalities who have made a name for themselves in perhaps every field, from medicine to science, justice, business, the arts, journalism, politics, diplomacy, and sport, accepted a medal from Rector Jaroslav Miller as a symbol of gratitude for representing their school. Stepping up to the podium were such personalities as oncologist Karel Indrák, scientist Radek Zbořil, American Studies scholar Josef Jařab, businesswoman Jarmila Podhorná, journalist Jakub Železný and dozens of others.

"When we left our alma mater years back and stepped up to the symbolic service line, we still had no clear idea of what would be waiting for us, what kind of match it would be. The umpire was perhaps already sitting in his chair, an unknown opponent had warmed up, and we had just completed the first serve. Nobody knew whether they would be successful. That's how it all began. Here a forehand, there a backhand, we didn't always win, sometimes we left the court in disappointment, but we always gave it our all. We can promise that we are ready for whatever comes next," promised, on behalf of all, the former tennis champion, psychologist, and UP graduate Helena Suková – her eyes gazing on the "ReUPblic".

*"I consider the award as a kind of testimonial that perhaps I have brought no shame upon the Olomouc university, which for me will be a commitment to try even harder."*

Vít Pohanka, radio journalist

*"The fact that I am currently the Head Chaplain of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic is thanks to what Palacký University endowed me with."*

Colonel Jaroslav Knichal

*"It is certainly an honour, there were medal recipients who have accomplished truly great things in diverse areas of human endeavour. I was pleased that there were scientists there; and I could be among them. There are not many Czech scientists who have achieved global recognition. I'm proud that some of them are from our alma mater."*

Radek Zbořil, Scientist and RCPTM Director

*"I keep in touch with the university not only for nostalgia's sake. For me it is also a bit of a challenge and motivation."*

Jakub Dürr, Czech Deputy Foreign Minister



## UP REUNION IN NUMBERS

**6 000** alumni came to Olomouc

—

**70<sup>th</sup>** anniversary celebration of the re-establishment of Palacký University

—

**1952** was the year of graduation of the eldest alumna

—

**6 500** km journey to the Reunion made by an alumna from Canada

—

**76** distinguished alumni received a commemorative medal

—

**11** check-in sites throughout the city

—

**180** days from conception to realisation of a glass container – for the check-in site in front of the main train station

—

**20** events in the accompanying programme

—

**7** gala concerts

—

**25<sup>th</sup>** anniversary celebration of the enlargement of the university textbook centre to the UP University Press

—

**0:30 am** was the time UPoint's last visitor left

—

**4 354** buttons with the Palacký University logo were distributed

—

**8 000** bottles of mineral water were distributed to alumni

—

**152** student volunteers helped in organising the event





8 faculties  
1 university



## The role of social workers in society debated by experts

Intercultural understanding, diversity management, social entrepreneurship and project writing – these new competencies in social work were the main theme of the two-day international conference Integration Without Borders, organised by the Department of Christian Social Work at the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology (CMFT).

“In a culturally diverse society, social workers will play an important role on all levels. As facilitators of social peace and well-being, they will contribute to better

quality of freedom and democracy in society,” said Květoslava Princová, the guarantor of the study programme International Social and Humanitarian Work at CMFT, and a former humanitarian worker.

Their invitation was accepted by speakers such as Dana Němcová, a psychologist and former Charter 77 spokesperson and human rights defender; Tomáš Hradílek, former Czech Minister of Interior; the first post-1989 UP Rector and American Studies expert Josef Jařab; and representatives from the University of Deusto, Bil-

bo, Spain, and Otto-Friedrich University, Bamberg, Germany. In addition to talks, practical workshops were featured.

The international conference, represented by eight partners from seven countries, was one of the results of the faculty’s project of the same name. “We had no idea at the beginning that hundreds of thousands of people would turn up in Europe. Social workers are those who will operate at the boundaries of various cultures, so they will need intercultural competencies,” emphasised Princová. (map, mav)

## Faculty of Arts offers Indonesian Studies with focus on tourism

The first twenty students have enrolled at Palacký University for a three-year BA study programme, Indonesian Studies, with a focus on the tourism industry.

The programme is unparalleled not only in the Czech Republic, but also in Europe. “The uniqueness of our Indonesian Studies is the system of study in the

third year. For the first two years, studies will take place in Olomouc, whereas the third year will be compulsory in Indonesian and English directly at Udayana University in Denpasar, Bali. In addition to studies, they will also apply their acquired knowledge during their pilot projects and research,” said Ondřej Pokorný, Head of the Indonesian section at the UP Department of Asian Studies. He added that their third-year students will be allowed to be employed in local tourism or research according to their research objectives. “Their school fees will be covered; however, other costs of living, which are similar to our standards, will be paid by themselves,” concluded Pokorný. The graduates will find employment in international institutions and companies, public administration, and the private sector. (map)





## Experts warn: We must shorten our time spent sitting

Experts from the UP Faculty of Physical Culture represented the Czech Republic at the 6th International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health in Bangkok, Thailand. The most important research findings in the area of active lifestyle were presented at the conference, such as the results brought by the international research group IPEN investigating the impact of the environment on the level of physical activ-

ity, or the work based on the study Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, on both of which experts from Olomouc participated.

“The congress participants accepted The Bangkok Declaration on Physical Activity for Global Health and Sustainable Development. This is the first global attempt to achieve the goals set within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN,” said one of the Olomouc representatives, Zdeněk Hamřík from the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies.

The findings obtained worldwide have confirmed that cities and their management have a key role in active living – in terms of transport, education, and urban planning policies. The key themes include the support of walking, cycling, and public transport over cars. Other themes encompass taking active breaks in schools, improved physical culture, better access to school sporting grounds, and the establishment and maintenance of public parks with the aim to support physical activities and a healthy lifestyle.

“Apart from the support of an active lifestyle we need to focus on significant shortening of the time spent sitting. According to the majority of studies, the time spent in a sedentary way is a strong and independent risk factor in a person’s lifestyle. The conference clearly voiced the concern that 45 minutes spent in a fitness centre cannot fully compensate the health risks of eight-hours’ sitting at work. It is such a huge issue that sitting was dubbed the new smoking,” added Hamřík.

(vim)



## Faculty of Health Sciences opens a new programme: Paramedic

Studies at the youngest UP faculty will be extended in the next academic year by a new BA programme: Paramedic. Those interested may acquire practical skills already during their study; as graduates, they will find their use in the pre-hospital, urgent, and anaesthesiology-resuscitation care and acute medical units. Thirty successful applicants will qualify for the first year. “We want to provide our students with a real opportunity to try out and check up on their theoretical knowledge during practical exercises,” underlined Docent Pavel Dráč, the guarantor of the new programme from the Department of Nursing, UP Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), and emergency room physician at the Olomouc University Hospital. Graduates will find application in emergency medical services as well as hospital emergency rooms, mountain rescue, and mines rescue.

One of the specific features of the study will be the focus on critical situation management. “Our study plan includes crisis intervention in psychiatry. It involves the solution of critical situations during coping with an aggressive patient, helping a rape victim, or someone who wants to commit suicide,” said FHS Vice-Dean Zdeňka Mikšová.

According to FHS Dean Jaroslav Vomáčka, the high quality of the new study programme has been made possible by the comprehensive three-year preparations concluded with successful accreditation. “We have an outstanding team and we believe that our graduates will be highly qualified. Therefore our plans include extension towards combined study programmes, and one of our visions is also a follow-up MA study programme,” he said.

(mav)



8 faculties  
1 university



## Faculty of Education published an almanac for its anniversary

At the end of last year, the UP Faculty of Education commemorated the 70th anniversary of its re-establishment in an original way. They published an almanac titled “Seventy Years of the Faculty of Education, Palacký University, 1946–2016”, mapping its history and creative output. Readers can become familiar with the school’s activities that have involved, since its foundation, the training of future teachers and other educational workers.

“We wanted to document our faculty’s journey from its dawn until today, when it has become an important academic and educational institute,” said Dean Čestmír Serafin. Thanks to the almanac, the public can remember its prolific activities and distinguished personalities in its management, as well as its places of residence throughout history. “Many may be surprised by the complicated development, as due to legal changes

the faculty had been affiliated and disaffiliated again. From its four founding institutes, the faculty has extended into 11 departments and 3 institutes. Seventy years ago, in the first year of its re-establishment, there were 110 enrolled students and 49 employed teachers, while today we have 4 400 students taught by 180 teachers. Throughout its existence, the faculty has been helmed by 16 deans,” said Dean Serafin. (map)

## Faculty of Law offers a new study programme in English

A new study programme mainly for foreign applicants will be offered from this academic year by the UP Faculty of Law. They have obtained accreditation for a follow-up Master’s programme, International and European Law. It is taught in English as a paid two-year full-time study. Applications for the academic year 2017/2018 will be accepted till mid-June 2017.

The launch of a new study programme confirms the quality of law education in Olomouc; it is the culmination of many years of work by the experts at the Department of International and European Law. “We believe that foreign students will respond positively to the attractiveness and content of the curriculum. They can also take part in exchange programs via the Erasmus Programme or internships and excursions at

our contractual partners,” said Martin Faix, Vice-Dean for International Relations. The core of the programme consists in standard key courses related to international and European law, complemented by an array of optional courses for further specialisation.

For the academic year 2016/2017, seven applications from abroad were submitted, and three students were accepted. A maximum of thirty students can enrol.

Applicants are required to have at least a BA degree in Law or a related discipline and language competence. “The programme is aimed, for example, at students who have been here via Erasmus. However, it is open to all excellent students,” said Martin Faix. Students may also find study in Olomouc attractive due to the Faculty of Law Excellence Scholarship, awarded to six students in total. “The criteria for this scholarship include previous study results, specialised activities, and fulfilling of study duties,” the vice-dean specified. Applicants for English programmes at the Faculty of Law should check out the website [www.studyupol.cz](http://www.studyupol.cz). (eha)





## New geopark reveals the magic of rocks

Rocks from all of Moravia and Silesia are represented in a geopark, constructed in a park located in close proximity to the Faculty of Science. There are 45 items from 31 locations, with total weight around 100 tonnes. They include the rare travertine from Kokory, marble from Supíkovice, and granite from Mrákotín. The Olomouc geopark, one of the largest in the country, is open to all schools and the public.

“Our geopark is the only one covering the entire area of Moravia and Silesia. Various types of minerals are represented, from different geological units of the Bohemian Massif and the Western Carpathians, which form the geological bedrock of Moravia and Silesia. Every rock is interesting in some aspect; we considered the size, shape, and structure of the minerals. Close inspection of some of the samples may reveal even very rare minerals,” said one of the creators of the geopark, Kamil Kropáč from the Department of Geology.

The geopark serves the education of Geology students as well as high school



and grade school students and the public. Four sections feature igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks, and other geological curiosities. Each sample on display carries a label with basic data; more information is available on information boards and the Geopark Olomouc

website. The heaviest item – an amphibolite from Bukovice in the Jeseníky Mountains – weighs around six tonnes, whereas the lightest item is a 300-kilogramme phyllite from Lomnička. The age of the handsome hunks is from 400 thousand to 600 million years. (srd)

## Faculty of Medicine opens top-notch education centre Aesculap Academy

State-of-the-art equipment simulating surgical performances are used by both undergraduate and postgraduate students of the UP Faculty of Medicine in the new education centre Aesculap Academy, in the premises of the Theoretical Institutes. The training of surgical skills, unavailable during assistance in the operating theatre, is enabled by top-notch simulators for laparoscopic operations and other sets of specialised simulators and various unique devices in the simulation laboratory, including a facility for preparation of teaching and biological materials.

“Our students practice their elementary surgical skills and examination methods on basic simulators. They can test their bimanual dexterity, while surgeons-to-be can perform laparoscopic gall bladder removal on a top-notch simulator. This simulator can retrospectively assess the outcome of the surgery as well as the skill of the surgeon in question,” explained Čestmír Neoral, Head of the Department of Surgery I and the main initiator of the centre’s foundation.

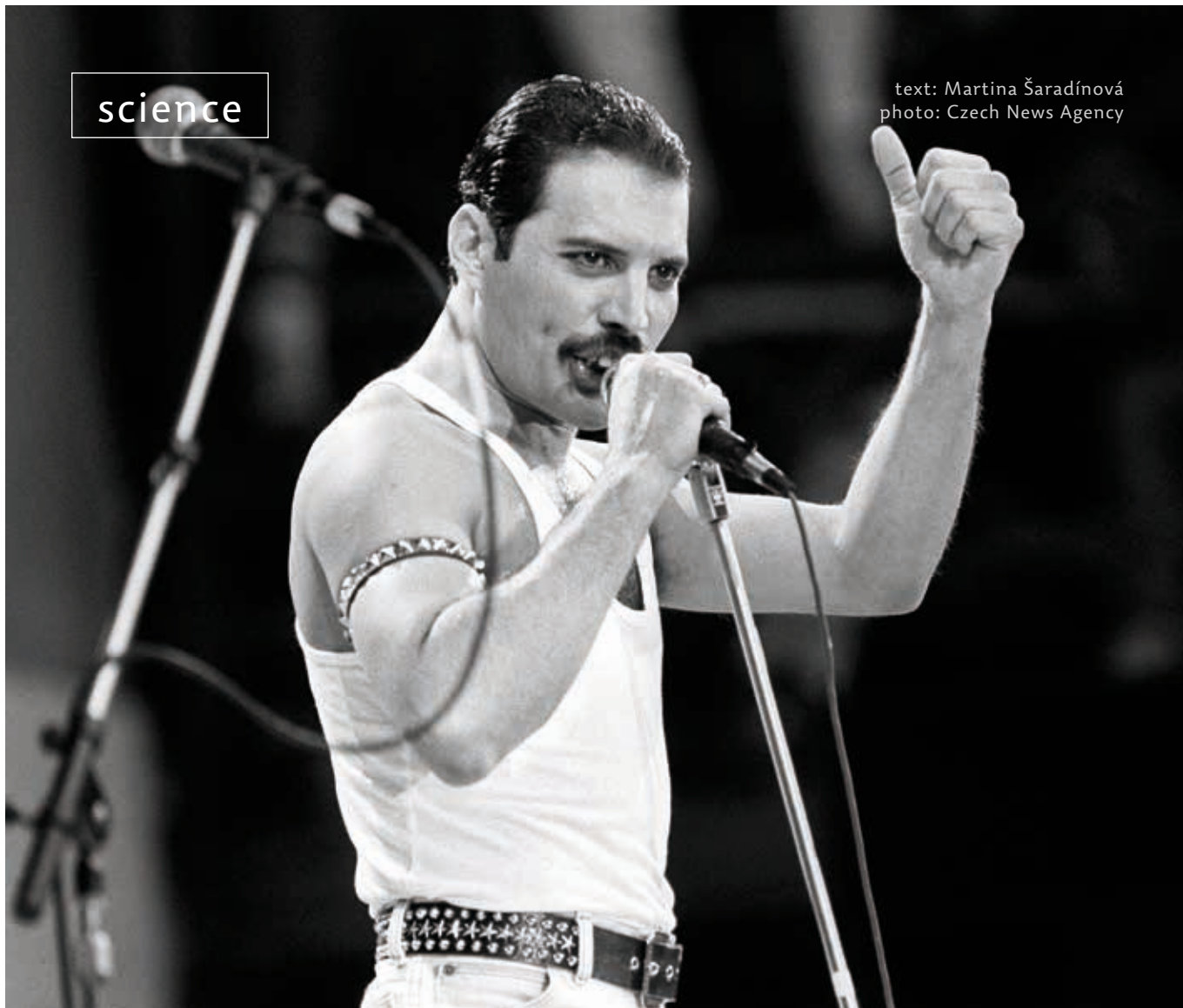
According to Dean Milan Kolář, the new educational centre is unparalleled in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. “It is a unique synthesis of undergraduate and postgraduate education. Students of surgery will ac-

quire basic skills, experience, and professional habits, and as our graduates, they will continue in postgraduate study and prepare for attestation and further specialisation,” underlined Milan Kolář. (mav)



science

text: Martina Šaradínová  
photo: Czech News Agency



## Acoustic analysis reveals uniqueness of Freddie Mercury's voice

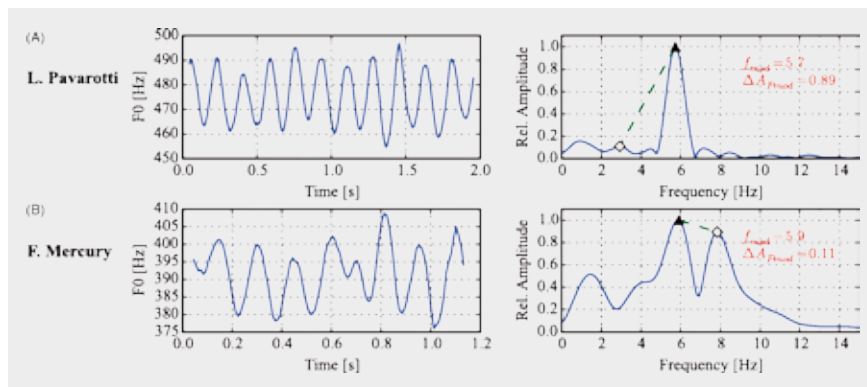
Anyone who is at least slightly familiar with the sound of the legendary singer Freddie Mercury has no doubts about the extraordinariness of his voice. It has now been proven scientifically. The biophysicist Christian Herbst analysed the voice of the former member of the rock band Queen at the Faculty of Science, Palacký University Olomouc. Together with his colleagues from Sweden, they measured the singer's vocal range and other characteristic features that made his voice so remarkable.

The article was published in the academic journal *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*.

Herbst in his research used the singer's vocal tracks isolated from full band recordings. In order to compare the singing and speaking voice of the pop legend, he used Mercury's recorded interviews. The research has resulted in the first scientific article analysing the voice of this music star. The article is also quite unusual in its focus on a pop star, since only opera singers have been analysed until now.

"The conditions for this research were not ideal, because we could not bring Freddie into our lab. We had to select the material that could be used in our research all the more carefully," said Herbst, who has returned home to Austria after completing his doctoral studies in Olomouc. He also admitted that the chanteur, who influenced popular music across the world, is one of his favourites. Several years of research thus were a great source of joy for him.





While the vibrato of most pop and rock singers is regular, Mercury's was considerably fast and irregular.

Source: *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*

### A baritone who sang as a tenor

On the basis of the analysis of Mercury's speaking voice, the biophysicist came to the conclusion that he was typologically a baritone, who sang as a tenor. "This is why his voice had an extraordinary timbre, a different quality," commented another expert on human voice research, Herbst's closest colleague and his former tutor, Jan Švec from the UP Department of Biophysics.

The research has also focussed on defining the vocal range of the singer. There had been speculation that Mercury's range was vast, over four octaves, but this could not be substantiated by the study. The analysis of available recordings suggested that his singing voice range was 37 semitones within the pitch range of F2 (about 92.2 Hz) to G5 (about 784 Hz). "Altogether,

it means a voice range of little more than three octaves. Not four octaves as believed, but still, it is a considerable range. Opera baritones are usually within the range of G to G1 (98 to 392 Hz), while tenor singers are usually between H and H1 (123 to 494 Hz), which are two octaves in both instances," explained Švec.

### Fast and irregular vibrato

The scientists also analysed the typical features of Freddie Mercury's voice. An intriguing discovery was his vibrato in long tones, which is manifested as a modulation of voice frequency. The vibrato frequency usually is between 4 and 7 Hz, meaning that the voice goes up and down, to put it in layman's terms, four to seven times per second. Mercury's frequency was higher,

between 5 and 8 Hz. "While the vibrato of most pop and rock singers is regular, Mercury's vibrato was considerably fast and irregular," summed up Herbst.

The experts also discovered how the charismatic singer could add the typical husky tone to his voice. The Swedish colleagues used a singer who could imitate Mercury, and filmed his larynx vibration with a high-speed camera. They found out that Freddie's husky voice was probably due not only to vibration of the vocal folds, but also a pair of tissue structures called ventricular folds, located above.

Freddie Mercury, considered one of the most important singers in music history, was also famous for his charisma and extravaganza during performances. Twenty-five years have passed since Mercury's death.

## Olomouc telemedicine centre is testing the advantages of home health care "on-line" in Scandinavia

To connect, measure, and with one click send information to your doctor's computer from home – and in comfort – can now be offered by modern telemedicine. Experts at the National Telemedicine Centre (NTMC) at the Olomouc University Hospital and UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry are already taking advantage of this technology for patients. As partners in a unique international project, they are joined in checking systems of home health-care through open fibre optic networks. They are testing and evaluating doctor-patient virtual communications in Finland, Sweden and Denmark.

Connecting to the fibre optic network can allow people in the comfort of their own homes to send measurements of heart rhythm and blood sugar levels and announce acute changes in the state of their health. "All the tools and equipment, for example pulse oximeter, blood pressure gauge, or glucometer, are easy to operate

and wirelessly connected to a tablet. The patient just clicks, the value is measured and automatically sent to the portal of the doctor in question. Via video consultation or mobile telephone, they can also be consulted on their actual health problem, thus saving time visiting the surgery," explained Michal Štýbnar, one of the experts at the clinic and the NTMC.



Identification of the most user-friendly and cost-effective combinations of telemedicine systems is the actual goal of the international project, aimed at Fibre to the Home (FTTH), which should at the same time cover the relevant prerequisites for national and regional health providers and

home social care within the EU. Scandinavian countries were chosen for testing due to the great distances between patients and health care centres and because the infrastructure of high-speed optical networks connected to private homes has already been in place there for more than fifteen years.

The main co-ordinator of the project, which began in June 2016, is the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia, Finland. The scientific guarantor for UP is the Head of the First Internal Medicine – Cardiology Clinic at the University Teaching Hospital Olomouc, Prof Miloš Táborský. The main result of the project will be the final report, with recommendations for the European Commission on eHealth systems and services using FTTH open networks. One component of the report will be the identification of examples of "good practise" which save money in healthcare and mainly represent a significant treatment benefit for the patient. (mav)



science

Vladimír Študent Jr at the operating theatre of the UP Centre of Robotic Surgery.

# Unique surgical technique developed by UP urologists

Surgeons from the Department of Urology, UP Faculty of Medicine, have achieved an outstanding success. They have developed a new technique which significantly reduces incontinence in patients who have undergone robotic surgery for prostate cancer. Their results were published in a prestigious journal of the European Association of Urology, *European Urology*, which features the most prominent studies in the field.

“The surgical removal of the tumour requires radical prostatectomy, that is, the removal of the entire prostate. The urethra is then connected to the urinary bladder by a simple surgical union called anastomosis,” explained the main author of the study and the co-creator of the new technique, Vladimír Študent Jr from the Olomouc department. The most frequent postoperative complications of this standard procedure include spontaneous incontinence. This can be however eliminated by a technique called Advanced Reconstruction of Vesicourethral Support (ARVUS). Olo-

mouc experts used muscles in the pelvic floor which were “left over” after the prostate removal.

## Original idea from Olomouc

“Following the radical prostatectomy, we pleat the remaining muscles and create a sort of collar, a hammock, which serves as a suspensory support. Incontinence is then reduced to a minimum,” clarified Vladimír Študent Jr. “We have maintained and supplemented the standard procedure. In fact, we have only done what no one has ever thought of – we put the muscles back and

text: Velena Mazochová  
photo: Viktor Čáp



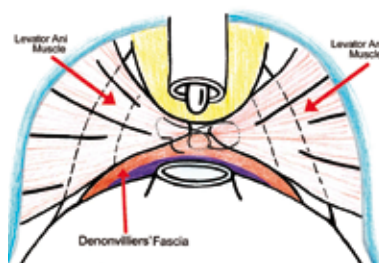
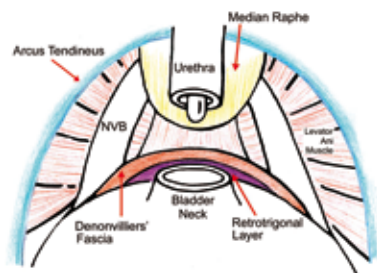


Diagram of the procedure

fixed them to the urinary bladder,” added Head of the Department of Urology and one of the authors, Vladimír Študent Sr.

The benefits of the new technique were verified with two thirty-member groups of men with localised prostate cancer. The first group of patients underwent the surgical procedure using the new technique, whereas the second group was operated upon according to standard procedure. “When we compared the two groups, we found out that patients from the first group achieved complete continence much sooner and faster, sometimes within hours after the surgery. Within two months, 70% of them were continent, as opposed to 20% in the other group,” said Vladimír Študent Jr.

### Improving the quality of patients' lives

Since the completion of the clinical study in mid-2014, Olomouc surgeons have performed nearly 500 operations using the modified surgical method. It has been presented with considerable acclaim at a number of domestic and foreign conferences; in addition, their article has been published in a globally renowned journal.

Apart from the recognition in academic circles, the research team highly values the benefits that this new technique has for their patients. “We have managed to significantly increase the quality of their lives. For the prevailing majority of them, problems related to incontinence are a very sensitive issue

and a serious social and hygienic problem, one which is really hard to cope with,” confirmed the head of the department.

Robot-assisted surgeries are conducted by the surgical team at the Palacký University Centre of Robotic Surgery, which has been in operation for seven years. Its basic equipment includes the da Vinci Surgical System S HD, which replicates the movement of the surgeon's hands by its interactive arms with surgical mini-instruments. They are inserted into the patient's body through miniature incisions and controlled by the surgeon from a joystick console. The robot's movements are processed and specified by a computer, and 3D imaging provides a perfect view of the operated area.

## UP botanists discover a new plant on Borneo

Scientists from the UP Faculty of Science and the Olomouc branch of the Czech Crop Research Institute (CRI) have scored again, discovering another plant of the *Thismia* genus in Brunei on the island of Borneo. *Thismia inconspicua* was found by the ecologists in a rainforest in early 2015. This makes it the third discovered species of a genus which was not known to exist on Borneo before the scientific expeditions from Olomouc arrived.

“It is a tiny non-green plant living in symbiosis with mushrooms. The whole plant is only a few centimetres long, with no leaves; its brown flower is barely visible in the surrounding layer of rotting foliage. The flower is bulb-shaped, as in other *Thismia* species,” commented Martin Dančák from the Department of Ecology and Environmental Sciences. The newly-found species is well characterised by its attribute inconspicua, inconspicuous. The Olomouc ecologists have dubbed the whole genus “hvězdnatky” in Czech: “starplants”.

Scientists from the Department of Ecology and Environmental Sciences have been conducting expeditions to the tropical rainforests of Borneo for years. Their first “catch” was *Thismia hexagona*, followed by *Thismia brunneomitra*, with

a flower reminiscent of a bishop's mitre. All three discoveries were made by botanist Michal Sochor from CRI.

“I was searching an area where the research has been going on for years and I noticed a tiny non-green plant, an obvious representative of the *Thismia* genus. Since I've only found specimens that were out of bloom, we had no certainty that this was a new species. So I came back in two days and found a specimen in bloom. The

discovery became clearer,” said Sochor.

Only after subsequent comparison with existing items in the herbarium and the literature could Olomouc scientists claim with certainty that they were in possession of a new species. The only found specimen of *Thismia inconspicua* in bloom remained in the Brunei National Herbarium and Resource Conservation Centre, and only a few overblown specimens were transported to Olomouc. (srd)





discovery

text: Martina Šaradínová  
diagram: Kateřina Holá, RCPTM

# UP scientists have created the smallest metallic magnets in the world

The world's smallest metallic magnets have been constructed by scientists from the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM) at the UP Faculty of Science together with colleagues from Prague and Singapore. The scientists are already testing the performance of these "nano-magnets" in medical diagnostics, but they are also likely to have important applications in ecology, electronics, and biotechnology. The discovery was published in the prestigious journal *Nature Communications*.

The magnets were prepared by combining nanoparticles of iron, nickel, or cobalt with chemically modified graphene as a chemical trap, enabling the formation and stabilization of metallic particles. Graphene can be represented as a sheet of carbon atoms that is only one atom thick; it is stronger than steel, conducts electricity much better than copper, and is completely transparent. "By chemically modifying graphene, we can control its electrical, optical and magnetic properties. In this study, we used specially modified graphene to imprison ultra-small metallic nanoparticles between graphene sheets, which prevented them from reacting with oxygen to form more common but less strongly magnetic metal oxides. This allowed us to create a new class of very powerful air-stable magnets," said Prof

Radek Zbořil, the project leader and director of RCPTM.

## Graphene "tamed" strongly reactive metal nanoparticles

Pure metal nanoparticles have attracted scientific interest for decades, largely because some of them exhibit a property known as superparamagnetism. "This phenomenon is inherent to very small magnetic particles, which show a strong and rapid response when exposed to an external magnetic field. It has been seen in metal oxide nanoparticles; its occurrence in more strongly magnetic particles of pure metal was only predicted by theorists. Such small metal particles are extremely reactive: they spontaneously ignite under normal conditions in air," says Dr Jiří Tuček from RCPTM, a leading Czech physicist in the field of magnetism.

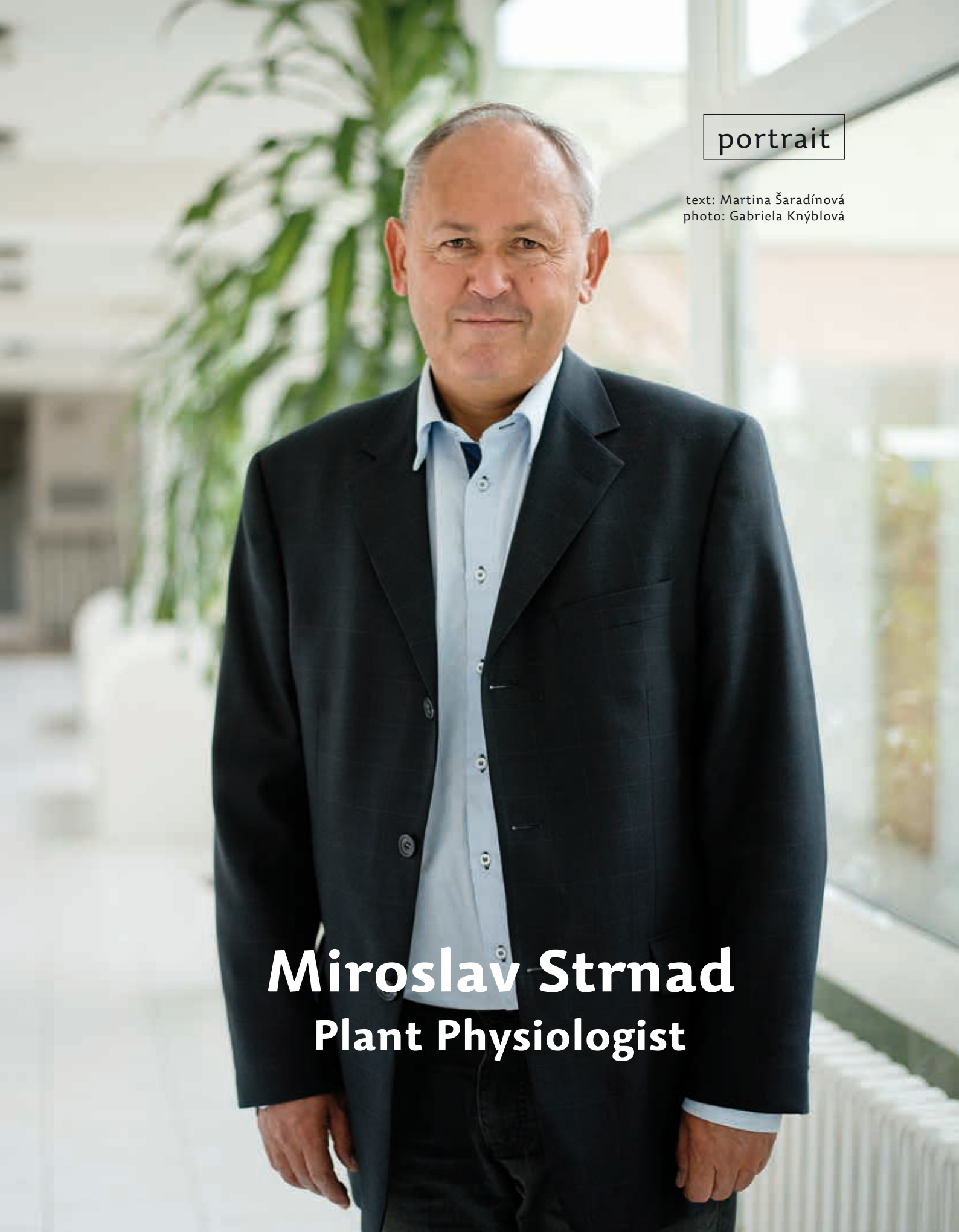
How did the Czechs overcome this experimental challenge? "The synthetic procedure is quite simple – one must work under an atmosphere of hydrogen and exploit the oxygen-bearing functional groups acting as a bridge between nanomagnets and graphene. The approach enables the preparation of a wide range of small and stable metal magnets in large amounts," explained Dr. Zdeněk Sofer from the University of Chemistry and Technology, Prague.

## Broad applications

The Czech team has already demonstrated the performance of their metallic nanoparticles in medical diagnostics. Experiments on mouse models at the Brno laboratories of the Institute of Scientific Instruments of the Czech Academy of Sciences have shown that metal nanomagnets are promising contrast agents in magnetic resonance imaging. However, the technology may have more applications. "Anchored magnetic nanoparticles can be manipulated with graphene without affecting its unique surface and physiochemical properties. The composites could thus be used as electrochemical sensors, also in electronics or magneto-optical technologies. Their potential for transport and ability to trap chemical substances on the graphene surface suggests applications in water treatment, targeted drug delivery, and the separation of important biomolecules in biochemistry and food," said Prof Martin Pumera, a co-author of the study, who works in Singapore.

The scientists from Olomouc have had many important successes in the fields of graphene research and magnetism. A few years ago, they prepared the world's thinnest insulator based on fluorographene. More recently, the same team reported the creation of the world's strongest two-dimensional organic magnets.



A full-length portrait of Miroslav Strnad, a middle-aged man with thinning grey hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a light blue button-down shirt. He is standing in a bright, modern interior space with large windows and a green plant in the background. The word "portrait" is written in a white box in the top right corner.

portrait

text: Martina Šaradínová  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová

# Miroslav Strnad

## Plant Physiologist

**"I am doing science I love. And doing good work makes me happy. That's about it." So says the laconic director of the Laboratory of Growth Regulators, who co-discovered the anti-cancer substances derived from cytokinins, when he describes his scientific and educational activities. Needless to say, his team has achieved such excellence that even foreign experts seek training in Olomouc.**

Prof Strnad is a renowned plant physiologist, the author of many prestigious scientific studies, patents, and most importantly, the discoverer of the plant hormone meta-topolin, as well as other substances with anti-tumour effects based on aromatic cytokinins. He founded and has led the Laboratory of Growth Regulators, a top institute worldwide in the research of plant hormones, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016. Although his professional career is intertwined with life processes in plants, he has been obsessed with and fascinated by medicine since his youth. Perhaps this was the reason why he would so strenuously seek for ways his favourite plant hormones could benefit human health. The findings of his research team are even used in cosmetics and agriculture.

The alpha and omega of his career are growth regulators – substances that determine the growth of plants. Some of them exist naturally – such as phytohormones, further divided into several groups. Prof Strnad has always put hope into cytokinins, and it was during their study when he had his famous "stroke of luck" – he incidentally discovered substances with significant biological activity, giving them a Slavonic name – topolins – based on the name for the poplar tree.

"Subsequently, we managed to find other anti-tumour agents, such as olomoucine, bohemine, and other derivatives. These achievements lead me to the idea to further develop this phytohormonal research and development of anti-tumour drugs. Since the Institute of Experimental Botany, which used to be located by the Hradisko monastery, did not provide suitable conditions, I happily accepted the offer made by the dean of the Faculty of Science then, Lubomír Dvořák, to relocate to an unoccupied complex in Olomouc-Holice and to found a joint institute. We moved in September 1996," Miroslav Strnad recalls the inception of the Laboratory.

He looks back on this period as one of his most happy ones. Among others, they managed to receive their first joint grant with the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FMD), which launched the multidisciplinary anti-tumour research in Olomouc and contributed to the development of several research groups.

#### **Inclination to medicine from the start**

Phytohormones have accompanied his scientific journey since the very beginning. However, even then Strnad liked to digress into medicine. "I developed methods which are called immuno-analyses and

#### **Miroslav Strnad (b. 1958)**

Native of Ždírec (near Jihlava), he graduated from the Agricultural University in Brno. Since 1984, he has worked in the Institute of Experimental Botany of the Academy of the Czech Republic in Olomouc. Since 1996, he has run the Laboratory of Growth Regulators, a joint workplace of the Institute of Experimental Botany and the UP Faculty of Science. He was named Professor in 2001.

He specialises in the development of new types of cytokinins or antibodies against growth regulators with a high degree of specificity. He conducts the isolation and identification of new phytohormone groups, the study of the physiological effects of cytokinins, and the interaction of plant hormones and molecular mechanisms in the cell cycle.

He has participated in several foreign internships and study trips, actively contributed at international conferences, and has been regularly giving lectures at foreign universities. He is the former vice-president of the Phytochemical Society of Europe. He is the author or co-author of 454 original studies, out of which more than 160 publications are in international impact journals. He is the author of 25 national and 34 international patents. His work in science has been awarded by the Rhone-Poulenc Rorer Award from Phytochemical Society of Europe (1998); the City of Olomouc Award (1999); and the Award of the Learned Society of the Czech Republic (2004), to name a few.





based on antibodies. I found these methods so fascinating for their sensitivity, that although I was supposed to be working on phytohormones, I rather focused on the development of methods for study of other substances, particularly those with a medicinal interest. The first group was methotrexate, which is used for treatment of several types of leukaemia, and whose level in the bloodstream has to be monitored closely. Especially small children are inclined to overdose. In collaboration with oncologists, we have developed a method to measure methotrexate in erythrocytes, still used today at the Children's Clinic in order to increase the effectiveness of treatment. I have always tended to have close relationships with medical doctors. Despite studying agriculture, I have always been attracted by medicine," confesses the scientist, always in a good mood.

### Winning scientific spurs with brassinosteroids

His research commenced with brassinosteroids, one of the most complex groups of phytohormones. "They stood at the very beginning of my research; my first task was to introduce tests for measuring the biological activity of brassinosteroids," Miroslav Strnad recalls. "Then we further

developed this issue in collaboration with Prof Zdeněk Kolář's team at FMD. We were the first in the world to find out that some brassinosteroids show anti-tumour activity. We've been developing efficient drugs and studying the molecular mechanisms of effects on the cellular and in vivo levels. Our collaboration involves physical chemists from our faculty, a number of departments from the FMD or the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry at the Academy of Sciences," he describes his further directions in research.

### Foreign experts training in Olomouc

One of the important scientific achievements of the Laboratory is also the development of methods measuring the presence of phytohormones. According to Prof Strnad, it was not an easy task, since these phytohormones are present in plants in very low concentrations. In order to examine them, very sophisticated methods are needed. "Their development was one of our main goals from the beginning. We did a great deal of work in this area. We've managed to develop analysis methods by means of mass spectrometry for almost all groups of plant hormones. In particular, I cherish the work of Ondřej Novák,

Karel Doležal, and Dana Tarkowská, who have done most development in this area. We are totally unique in this in the world. It is our pride, and thanks to this we are in touch with a number of foreign institutes," Prof Strnad explains.

Lately, they have begun developing even the synthesis of individual groups of regulators, trying to find biological applications for these derivatives of phytohormones. In relation to this, several new areas have been launched, such as in cosmetics, in the development of tuberculostatics, or drugs for treatment of neurodegenerative diseases. The research always starts in the laboratory and is concluded by field experiments.

### "A nose for people"

Professor Strnad is not keen on talking about his successes. He prefers to highlight the individual teams of the Laboratory of Growth Regulators. The bond between this top-notch multidisciplinary institute and its director is rather close. "It is all about people, and I managed to find some great people indeed. Perhaps I have a nose for them. They are all nice, easy-going, and enthusiastic. I like them very much and I have great respect for them. I believe that once I'm gone, they will carry on full throttle," Prof Strnad confides.

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**Zdeněk Kolář**

Department of Clinical and Molecular Pathology, UP FMD

I've known Miroslav Strnad for 20 years, since I was a young assistant working with the Institute of Experimental Botany at the Academy of Sciences, looking for points of contact in research of mammal and plant cells. I soon made friends with a doctoral student who commuted on the same bus. During our journeys, we were working out our future plans and talked about the regulation of the cell cycle. This is probably where the idea to test plant growth regulators on human tumour cells originated, upon which his future discovery was based – the evidence of cytostatic effect of cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitors. We also shared an interest in fine arts. During the following years, we investigated several research projects together and our collaboration has always been excellent. I much appreciate his directness, integrity, fairness, and reliability.



**Ondřej Novák**

Laboratory of Growth Regulators

I met Miroslav Strnad for the first time in 2000, when I started working at the Laboratory of Growth Regulators. Miroslav was my tutor and mentor during doctoral studies; today we're close colleagues and friends. Our institute recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, and I think that its establishment was the most distinctive scientific accomplishment of Prof Strnad. Under his supervision, a team with international outreach and superb scientific results was created. Miroslav is a selfless and empathetic person who is not afraid to be surrounded with young people and who listens to all your ideas, no matter how crazy they are. Although he is a critically thinking person, he believes in human goodness, which is very enriching and inspirational in today's times (and not only for me personally).

success



## Three doctoral students winners in French Embassy science contest

Three promising scientists from the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM) at the UP Faculty of Science stood out in the largest science contest for doctoral students in the Czech Republic, organised by the French Embassy in Prague. Kateřina Holá placed second in Chemistry (the Jean-Marie Lehn Award), while Markéta Palončyová confirmed her erudition in Computational Chemistry (the Joseph Fourier Award) by her third place; in addition, she was also granted a special IT4Innovations award. Kristýna Krasulová placed third in Pharmacy (the Sanofi Award).

Kateřina Holá earned her achievement for her current work, the pivotal theme of which is carbon quantum dots – a new generation of nanomaterials that could be applied in diagnostics, treatment of several diseases and technological applications. Markéta Palončyová, also a post-graduate student, submitted a work entitled “Computer Simulations of Small Molecule Interactions with Biomembranes”. The simulations, conducted on high-performance computers, are made for example in order to predict the permeability of membranes towards molecules. These findings may be useful in medicine

and the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.

The laureate from the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FMD), Kristýna Krasulová, investigates interactions between drugs and cytochrome P450 liver enzymes which metabolise the drugs and facilitate their removal from the body. “The work of Kristýna Krasulová caught our attention for the applicability of her findings in medical practice. In addition, she has been the author or co-author of two impact publications, while being a third-year student,” said Martin Modrianský, Vice-Dean of the FMD and a member of the jury. (srd, mav)

## Opticians awarded by the Czech Technology Agency

Scientists from the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM) and the Joint Laboratory of Optics (JLO) at Palacký University de-

veloped, together with their colleagues from the Institute of Physics at the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Meopta-optika company from Přerov, brand new multi-layer optical systems, which will be used in the products made by this largest Czech producer in the field of optics. Their project was awarded by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic in 2016 as one of the best projects in applied research, in the category Originality of the Solution.

The project, called “Modern multilayer optical systems”, dealt with selected specific issues of thin optical layers and the entire systems made out of them. “The first part of the project investigated a brand-new technology utilising plasma in order to produce the optical layers and adequate measurement and control methods. Subsequently we designed and created multi-

layer optical systems for specific products made by Meopta or for use in nonstandard applications, such as on large-sized optical elements for cosmic radiation research, which we developed for projects such as the Cherenkov Telescope Array, CERN, and the Pierre Auger Observatory,” said the main investigator of the project, Miroslav Hrabovský.

We encounter these thin optical layers every day. They are present in practically every optical element or product, such as eyeglasses, camera lenses, cellular phones and similar devices. They radically enhance the parameters of the optical systems they are applied into.

The Technology Agency of the Czech Republic awarded Czech applied research projects for the fourth time. Twenty-eight projects qualified out of hundreds, and only four projects were awarded. (srd)





## Faculty of Arts doctoral student prevails in translation contest

Jaroslava Němčáková, a postgraduate student at the Department of Slavic Studies, UP Faculty of Arts, won the translation contest organised by the Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Prague. She received a contract for her translation, which will be published in 2017 by the Host publishing house.

"I'm happy. Although I've been doing literary translation for quite some time in translation courses, this is a great achievement for me," said Jaroslava Němčáková. She won the opportunity to have her translation published, which is a school novel called *Práce s chybami* (Work with Mistakes) by a contemporary Russian writer Yuri Polyakov.

Němčáková happened to start studying Russian incidentally, at high school.

"I was quite good in English and German, and we were obliged to pick yet another language as beginners. So I picked Russian because it seemed easy," added the student of Russian Literature at the Department of Slavonic Studies. She submitted translations of excerpts from three books, and Němčáková thinks she won because she's excellent in Czech. "There are a number of aspects that have to be observed in translation. And the knowledge of your mother tongue is essential," she said. Good translation involves perfection in the comprehension of the original and its interpretation. No factual mistakes should contaminate the text. "The craft is not easy to master. The effect of the translation on the reader should be the same as with the original – even



though the original cannot be matched, in fact. The reader, however, should not be able to recognise it's a translation due to how natural it appears," explained Jaroslava Němčáková. (map)

## Olomouc orthodontists joined the prestigious European association NEBEOP

The Department of Orthodontics at the Institute of Dentistry and Oral Sciences in Olomouc became a full member of the European association Network of Erasmus Based European Orthodontic Programs (NEBEOP), which joins the best teaching institutes for postgraduate education in orthodontics in Europe. The prestigious Certificate of Membership was granted to the Olomouc department

as the first post-communist country at the last year's Congress of the European Orthodontic Society in Stockholm.

Granting of the certificate was preceded by an external evaluation procedure judging the fulfilment of demanding indicators on the basis of extensive written documentation. "Then an inspection at our department followed, which allowed us to discuss all the criteria in detail with

the institute management, and meeting with the postgraduates and their tutors," said Milan Kamínek, the former head of the Dental Clinic II at the Olomouc University Hospital and a leading European expert in orthodontics. Within the evaluation procedure, the Olomouc clinic was visited by Demetrios Halazonetis from the University of Athens (second on the right in the picture, with Milan Kamínek to his left and Miloš Špidlen on the far right).

According to Miloš Špidlen, Head of the Institute of Dentistry and Oral Sciences, this membership is a matter of prestige that has no equal in the post-communist region. "In the Czech Republic, there have been two tentative members, the orthodontic departments at teaching hospitals in Olomouc and Vinohrady, Prague. We have been the first to join the top 25 European institutes of orthodontics with internationally recognised high-quality postgraduate education," emphasised Špidlen.

The goal of NEBEOP is to raise the quality of specialised training in orthodontics, by means of the model Erasmus Programme, conceived by a group of leading European experts within an EU project. (map)



success



## Jan Peřina awarded the Neuron Fund Award for Contribution to World Science

The six personalities who were granted the 2016 Neuron Fund Award for Contribution to World Science included a Palacký University representative. The laureate in Physics was Jan Peřina from the UP Faculty of Science and the Joint Laboratory of Optics.

Professor Peřina received international acclaim with his publications on quantum, statistical, and non-linear optics and the theory of coherence of light. He is the co-discoverer of the properties of non-classical light. He perceives the award as an appreciation of his fifty years of work.

“This period was a journey through differing times; our activities were quite diverse and the conditions for scientific work also

kept changing. You needed to make every effort, be patient and have a passion for science. I have had a number of colleagues who are in fact also acknowledged by this award. The award further goes to the founder of the Olomouc school of quantum optics, Prof Bedřich Havelka,” said Prof Peřina, who collaborates with domestic and foreign experts and participates in projects of the Department of Optics and their publication activities. He graduated from the Faculty of Science in Olomouc in 1964, having been employed there ever since. He also works at the Joint Laboratory of Optics at Palacký University and the Institute of Physics at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

The Scientific Board of the Neuron Fund proposes top scientists who have significantly influenced the degree of knowledge in their fields and who dedicate their efforts to intense work with young generations of scientists. The criteria for nomination include personal integrity, openness to various scientific communities, and service for society through science. The award was also granted to the chemist Josef Michl, who has been to Olomouc as a guest in the Rudolf Zahradník Lecture Series. In Mathematics, Pavel Exner was awarded; in Medicine, Milan Šamánek; in Social Sciences the native of Olomouc, Leopold Pospíšil; and in Biology, Jan Svoboda. (srd)

## The Kingdom of the Netherlands decorated Jitse van Dijk



A member of the Institute of Social Health (OUSHI) at the UP Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology and a docent at the University Medical Center in Groningen, Jitse P. van Dijk received the title “Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau”. The Netherlands thus appreciated his substantial contribution to the solution of problems in the area of public health and healthcare in Central Europe.

His professional work is oriented at the improvement of life conditions of people with a chronic ailment, mainly patients with multiple sclerosis, kidney failure, and Parkinson’s disease. His research has significantly contributed to the broadening of opportunities for their integration into society. “This honour is a confirmation that we’re taking steps in the right direction, especially concerning interna-

tionalisation: trying to make changes at several universities in order to hinder the brain drain. Western universities often headhunt excellent experts from abroad, but they are oblivious to their original scientific environment,” said van Dijk.

In the OUSHI team, he is in charge of social determinants of health, chronic diseases, and public health service. He is one the lecturers in the doctoral programme at the Faculty of Theology called “Social and Spiritual Determinants of Health” and also collaborates with several university institutes. “His work immensely enhanced the international prestige, quality of research, and educational standards of OUSHI as well as the entire Olomouc university,” said Peter Tavel, the faculty’s dean and OUSHI’s team leader.



## UP Law alumna's dissertation awarded with honorary diploma

The dissertation of the UP faculty of Law alumna Markéta Horová was described as “having extraordinary quality” by the Institute for Sustainable Development of Settlements (IURS). She was awarded an honorary diploma in the premiere year of the Jiřina Bergatt Jackson Award. Markéta Horová succeeded with her work entitled “Possibilities of Construction in Flood Areas”.

The jury evaluated sixteen works from eight Czech and Slovak universities. “Works entered into competition had to deal with territorial development. As a member of the jury I must say that all of them maintained very high standards. We eventually granted one prize and four honorary mentions,” said Barbara Vojvodíková, Director of IURS. She pointed out that the issues of territorial development are multidisciplinary, so the prize was designated for various study programmes and professions. “One of the main criteria in

evaluation was practicality and applicability,” explained Vojvodíková.

Markéta Horová wrote her dissertation under the supervision of Veronika Tomšzková from the Department of Administrative and Financial Law. The work deals with how flood areas and their active zones are defined and focused on the presumptions and restrictions on construction in these areas. The author considers the suitability of flood areas registration in the Land Registry and provides an assessment of the current state of the declaration of flood areas for significant watercourses in the Olomouc Region. “The success in the contest came as a surprise and at the same time it has strengthened my conviction that I need to further perfect my writing. I'd like to work in a field of law where I could utilise this skill,” said Markéta Horová and added, “I'll be happy if I inspire other students with my achievement.” (eha)



## Global commission for speech therapy chaired by Kateřina Vitásková



The Standing Committee for Education for Speech Language Pathology has a new chairperson – Kateřina Vitásková from the UP Faculty of Education.

“It is an acknowledgement of my professional and individual efforts dedicated to speech therapy and special education. The award is also significant for the Speech Therapy programme at our faculty as well as all of Czech special education. The way Palacký University manages it, it is an excellent scientific and professional discipline,” said Kateřina Vitásková, who is Head of the Department of Speech and Language Therapy and Communication Ability Studies at the Institute of Special Education Studies, UP Faculty of Education.

The International Association of Logopaedics and Phoniatics is a scientific association affiliating 55 logopaedic and phoniatic organisations from 35 countries. Including individual members from 54 countries, it has 230 000 members and 12 scientific boards.

Her success in the selection is a big satisfaction for the speech therapist. “It has confirmed the dominance of my concept in the next development of logopaedics. I prefer a direction reflecting special education solutions as well as a pro-inclusion course, leading to direct linking of interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration. By this I mean the collaboration not only between experts in education and healthcare, but also social services counselling,” added Docent Vitásková.

More than ever, it will be necessary to build mutual relations between individual expert groups and departments, which participate in intervention with persons with communication disabilities. According to Kateřina Vitásková, speech therapy should not be separated from the issues of persons with special needs and should not be concentrated in the clinical sector only, because it penetrates all departments and all age groups. (map)

## Fischer Lecture given by philosopher Karel Floss

The annual lecture honouring J.L. Fischer was given at the end of 2016 by the philosopher and translator Karel Floss, a student and colleague of Fischer's, the first rector of the re-established university. It was entitled The Philosopher's Lot in Magical Olomouc. In the crowded Corpus Christi Chapel at the UP Arts Centre, he spoke of Fischer's personal traits and mentioned several milestones in history when the first post-WW2 rector acted in a way that should never be forgotten.



"Fischer's effort to oppose violence at any cost was something that made him radically different from others. He was able to defend academic liberties even in 1948 [the year of the Czech communist putsch], and to stand up for his right to have his own opinion, his own individual philosophy. Even in those times, he asserted academic liberties and cardinal autonomy in science and education for his university. It might not seem like much, until we compare his activities with other academic figures in that era," emphasised Karel Floss. (map)

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## Olomouc German Studies professor awarded in Austria

The German Literature expert, Ingeborg Fialová Fürstová from the UP Faculty of Arts, was awarded the prestigious Danubius Award in Austria. The award has been granted since 2011 by the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe to personalities who have contributed to good neighbourly relations in the region of Central and South-Eastern Europe in science, research, and education. Ingeborg Fialová Fürstová is the first Czech woman who has received this award, initiated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy. Wynfrid Krieglleder from the University of Vienna in his speech highlighted her founding activities, such as the establishment of the Research Centre for German Moravian Literature together with her colleagues from the UP Department of Germanic Studies, the Department of Jewish and Israeli Studies – The Kurt and Ursula Schubert Centre of Jewish Studies, and the study programme German for the Humanities. (ipu)



## Faculty of Theology participated in food donation

A food collection for the needy, organised by the Salvation Army, Caritas Olomouc, and People in Need, received a donation from the UP Faculty of Theology. Its students and academics presented the donation to Caritas Olomouc and the Food Bank of the Olomouc Region during an event on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The charity event, on Olomouc's Upper Square, was opened by the photographer and UP alumnus Jindřich Štreit. (mav)



## Jiří Brady awarded by UP



The crowded Old Town Square in Prague applauded Jiří Brady when he accepted the Commemorative Medal of Palacký University from Rector Jaroslav Miller on the occasion of the 98th anniversary of the foundation of Czechoslovakia. Jiří Brady survived Terezín, Auschwitz, and the subsequent death march. Brady's life mission has been to remind humanity of the Holocaust, victims of which included his sister Hana and both parents. "We are awarding a man whose life story is a history textbook of this country. Allow me, Mr Brady, to acknowledge your persistent effort to raise public awareness about the horrors of the Holocaust, all your help to this country after 1989, and your defence of human rights as well," said UP Rector Miller. (ipu)

## Attack 2016 tested sorting of the injured in terrain

The targets of a simulated terrorist attack in the Olomouc shopping centre Šantovka Gallery were students of UP Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). Fortunately only in the role of extras, because they participated in a tactical exercise Attack 2016, the main purpose of which was to practise an effective method of sorting the injured. The participants in this demanding test included the faculty and the Paramedic Service and the units of the Integrated Protection System of the Olomouc Region. The aim of the project, with long-term collaboration with FHS experts, is to develop a standard for sorting the injured, valid for the whole country. (red)





## Palacký University and Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed Memorandum on Collaboration

UP Rector Jaroslav Miller, together with Petr Gajdušek, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed a Memorandum on Collaboration, involving international relations, law, political science, public health, and social work. "The Memorandum will support internships for UP students in the Czech Republic and abroad, research and expertise in areas of common interest," said Ivana Oborná, UP Vice-Rector for International Relations. (map)



## Nanomaterials in the fight against counterfeiting

Scientists from the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM) have an efficient tool for the quick and cheap detection of counterfeit goods in liquid states. The new technology may be utilised by liquor, cosmetics, and perfumes producers and in the production and distribution of fuels. The method has already met with interest among investors and its commercial potential has been confirmed by the gold medal from the 2016 Invent Arena, an international exhibition of technical innovations and patents held in Trinec, hosting 21 exhibitors from 21 countries.

KeyLock is an instrument which prevents counterfeits by means of a unique pair of compounds called Key and Lock. The method is based on adding certain molecules into the product in very low concentrations. These molecules work as a lock that protects the product. A nanomaterial made on the basis of magnetic particles and silver with an anchored chemical key then enables to find and select these molecules, separate them by means of a magnetic field, and extremely precisely evaluate their concentration by surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy. "The Key and Lock used are known only to the producer; it can be changed



on request. The chemical lock added to the product is identical with natural ingredients, is absolutely non-toxic, and not harmful to the environment," said Václav Ranc, the co-author of the method. The test of authenticity takes only a few minutes, and the costs for such a protection are minimal, given the overall product's price. The RCPTM experts are now working on the optimisation of the method in order to make it applicable to solid materials and goods. (srd)

## UP Vice-Rector Miroslav Mašláň – Visionary of the Year

The award for the outstanding personality in Czech innovation was awarded by the CzechInno Association for the first time last year. The title "Visionaries Project Person of the Year 2016" was awarded to the UP vice-rector Miroslav Mašláň for his achievements in technology transfer. The jury acknowledged his lifelong work and exceptional contribution to development of innovation and technology transfer in the Czech Republic.



Miroslav Mašláň (on the right), currently UP vice-rector and former rector, appreciated the award as a confirmation that those many years of his activities dedicated to the ideas of innovation and technology transfer were steps in the right direction. "I take it as an appraisal of not only my activities, but mainly Palacký University on its achievements over many years in the areas of innovation, entrepreneurship, technology transfer, collaboration between the academic and application spheres," said the first historic laureate. (mav)

## Palacký University again among 500 most prestigious universities

In 2016, Palacký University again succeeded in international university rankings. The journal U.S. News and World Report featured UP among the 500 most respected universities in the world, while on the national scale, UP placed second, after Charles University in Prague. In 2015, the oldest Moravian university reached the "bronze" position among Czech universities, however last year UP managed to surpass Czech Technical University in Prague. Olomouc's university broke through the world's top 300 universities in chemistry, botany, and zoology.

Similarly to previous rankings, the success of UP was based on its performance especially in the natural sciences, where a high number of publications reached the top 10 or even top 1 percent of the most cited works in the field, as well as on broad international collaboration.

The 2016 U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings list UP at number 494. Charles University in Prague as in the previous year is the domestic leader, placing 201st. Third among Czech universities, Czech Technical University in Prague, dropped from last year's 399th position to number 535 this year. A pool of 1262 universities worldwide were polled in the rankings, and only the top 1000 schools, from 65 countries, were ranked. (srd)

photos:

Milada Hronová

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Olomouc Region Emergency Medical Services

Donau-Universität Krems/skokanitsch CzechInno

lifestyle

# To the soaring heights... with a pacemaker

text:  
Martin Višňa  
photos:  
Markéta Hanáková archive

The mountains are like a magnet. Markéta Hanáková can vouch for that, not giving up mountain climbing even after having a pacemaker implanted after her heart stopped several times due to a birth defect. She is the first person in the world with a "ticker" to reach the height of 7 219 metres, a record which she tried to beat last year. Experts at the UP Faculty of Physical Culture aided her in her preparations.



Hanáková, who works as a radiology assistant at the Olomouc University Hospital, wanted to reach the new record together with her boyfriend, Zdeněk Hodinář, by climbing Afghanistan's highest peak, Noshahq – 7 492 metres. The mountain, in the words of the woman climber, had other ideas. "During the acclimatisation and setting up the high camps, we had it pretty good, but during the time of our last attempt at the summit the weather went completely against us. Every day there were storms dumping new snow, it got colder, and the winds increased," reminisced Hanáková on her August expedition.

But as she says, she and her boyfriend have a clean conscience. They gave it their all on the mountain. And they did not underestimate their preparations, during which for three weeks they did "boot camp" in the Peruvian Andes at heights around five thousand metres. At the Faculty of Physical Culture, under Michal Botek and his colleagues from the Department of Natural Sciences in Kinanthropology, they went through repeated non-stress and hypoxic stress tests at Olomouc's altitude, simulating heights averaging roughly from four to six thousand metres.

"Thanks to special equipment and oxygen masks, Dr Botek simulated altitudes of 6 200 metres. That part of the research went okay. For the entire period they monitored our blood pressure, the oxygen saturation in our blood, our heart rate. After evaluating the non-stress part we went for a 'mountain hike'. We were 'placed' at 4 500 metres

and trekked for an easy few minutes. For the time being we were breathing air typical at those altitudes, so the experts again carefully monitored how our bodies reacted at those heights. What was interesting was that even though we were both operating at the same altitude conditions, each of us was differently acclimatised," as Hanáková explained the measuring.

The mountain reality however differs significantly from laboratory conditions and good results on paper are not enough. "In the laboratory we were 'up there' only during the testing periods. When a person is constantly in the mountains at that height, they perceive it much more intensively, and if the time comes when a person cannot cope with the altitude, there is no button to push – we have to do it ourselves, go lower to where the body can start feeling better," added Hanáková, who reached her physical depths on Noshahq.

She has not decided to give up on the pastime which she took up after her twenty-fifth birthday, even though before she had never been any kind of athlete or mountain climber. However, she is well aware of certain limitations. "It might seem today that the pacemaker has not changed my life much, but after the operation I thought that that was the end of mountain climbing for me. But we have kept on; we just have to plan a bit differently for all the hikes and activities. I do feel that it is not as easy as it used to be," adds Markéta Hanáková, who also writes, has photo exhibitions, and shows documentaries about her travels.



text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photos: Gabriela Knýblová

interview

A full-page portrait of Delana Mikolášová, a woman with long, wavy blonde hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a dark blue double-breasted blazer over a white and blue striped shirt, and light-colored trousers. Her hands are clasped in front of her. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office interior with large windows.

**Delana Mikolášová:  
Failure is not a problem.  
It is taken into account.**

**Delana Mikolášová (b. 1985)**

Graduated in Political Science and European Studies from the UP Faculty of Arts. She had study stays in the Netherlands and Israel. Her first work experience was gained during her studies at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague and the EU Delegation to Tel Aviv. She spent more than a year and a half at the University of Tel Aviv during her study stay. In 2012, she beat out over 200 candidates for a place at the Diplomatic Academy for junior diplomats at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has long specialised in the Middle East. She has been employed at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs in that capacity since 2013. Since November 2015 she has been working as the science and technology attaché at the Czech embassy in Israel.

She clipped an article on diplomacy from a girls' magazine when she was in middle school. The profession fascinated her. At home in the small mountain town of Hanušovice, from time to time she would let herself dream, what if? What if she could really become a diplomat, if she could travel, live abroad and meet interesting people? And what if she could someday see Israel? A country with which she had nothing in common, but which had always attracted her. Most romantic dreams coming from Hanušovice stay right there, up in the Jeseníky hill country, forever. But not hers. Delana Mikolášová eventually became a diplomat. The first Czech Scientific, R&D and Innovation attaché. And where does she represent the Czech Republic? In Israel.

— To follow one's dreams, a person actually has to do something. You studied Political Science at Palacký University, but your interest in the Middle East goes back much further, doesn't it?

The region has always attracted me, and when I was fifteen or sixteen I began to become interested in Judaic law, in the Torah, in Islam, I was even interested in the religious dimension of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, I wanted to know what its roots were. In high school I would read books under my desk on the theme. Our class advisor, a mathematician and physicist, would tease me, telling me that I'd never find work in that area, that I ought to switch to technology and maths. But I told him that I was going to try to do what interested me. When I thought about what I would study next, I chose Political Science at Palacký.

— You became our first Scientific, R&D and Innovation attaché. What kind of visions did you bring into your career? You're not a fortune teller, you're a political scientist.

I think that in order to perform my work properly, I don't have to be an expert in microbiology or organic chemistry. I have great respect for all the scientists, men and women, whom I've met. For a diplomat it is a joy to meet with esteemed professors who are experts in their fields. They are admirable and at the same time nice people who are captivated by their work. My work however is different – I have to know how to bring the Czech and Israeli sides together. I have to know how Israelis negotiate and think, what kind of information they expect from their Czech partners, and vice versa. My position is to meet with people and show them what possibilities Czechia has in the areas of science and research, and find suitable intersections for cooperation. And by no means a small part of my work is communication between both state administrations.

— Why did the placement of the first scientific attaché go to Israel?

Israel is an extremely dynamic country,

which in recent years has been building a successful image as a country of start-ups and progressive new firms. Israelis are really trying to be seen as a top country in the world regarding science, research, and innovation – and not as a country of conflict. It is a well-chosen strategy which has attracted interest not only on the part of European countries, but also India, China, Taiwan, and Latin America. These international ties are the result of very sophisticated diplomacy, diplomacy oriented at practical rather than political cooperation. This is a diplomacy which profits all sides and does not touch the controversial Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It makes sense, because a number of technologies which were originally developed in Israel are now used worldwide.

— Your placement is limited to a period of two years, with the possibility of a one-year extension. You're now at the halfway point of your mission, so you are in a position to evaluate. Have you been surprised by anything?

Israelis are very direct and truthful; even if you are used to that, sometimes that directness is almost bewildering, and very difficult to explain to Czech partners. For instance: Israelis will wait a few hours for an e-mail answer, one day at the max. They do not wait three weeks. When they see an opportunity, they decide on it immediately. I often have to explain to the Czech side that even if we perhaps have a more complicated bureaucracy, it is simply necessary to make swift and specific decisions. It doesn't work in the way that you get a business card from an Israeli partner and half a year later you call him, saying you met once and you have an interest in cooperation.

— What are our university's chances in making promising collaborations?

Very great: our sciences and applied research are at the highest levels. One weakness, however, is that we are not very good at "selling" our findings. Israelis typically do not need to base cooperation on complicated theoretical elaborations, they want specific steps – a scientist comes, he meets with a colleague from the university, presents his work, and if he is able to interest someone in it, then the collaboration between universities is continued and something is created. Israelis are quite blasé when discussing generally described projects, they always want a specific collaboration core.

— So, don't be afraid to make contact?

Failure is never seen there as a problem. Not at all. Failure is taken into account. Israel is a powerhouse in the area of innovation. But the successful inventions and technology which today make up the showcase of their start-up country are often made by leaders who were perhaps unsuccessful twice before. They learn from their mistakes. Mistakes are not a problem, they are



a natural part of the process of knowledge, of improvement. Czechs are not yet used to that kind of thinking. But if we are to get over it, we'll have to learn not to be ashamed of making mistakes.

**— Are you used to life in Israel? To the constant risk, young men and women with guns everywhere?**

If you travel there as a tourist, at the beginning it might seem surprising and perhaps even oppressive. But if you're there for a longer time and you're used to it, you get nervous when you go to a shopping mall and there is no such control. Israelis are conscious of risk and they respect the safety rules, which are part of their daily lives. A left backpack will be immediately noticed and reported. And thanks to that awareness it is actually a safe country. The first tourist impression should be that no one should be intimidated or deterred from visiting.

**— Are Israelis friendly?**

Certainly. They are ready to communicate with you, when you need something, someone will always take care of you, give you advice. The society there is used to helping people out, you can see it in the communities of Israelis living abroad. The first thing an Israeli does when travelling is to see how the Jewish or Israeli community is living there, or contact someone who has already been there, meet with them, get tips on accommodation, etc. That's how they operate in all walks of life, there is no shame in asking someone for help, contacts, to communicate.

**— Do they help outsiders, too?**

Yes. I experienced this myself for the first time years ago, when I studied in Israel. They often helped me, and I would ask, why? Why invest time and energy into an outsider? They explained to me that it is not completely "unselfish". That perhaps I will return the favour in the future and that we will have a more personal relationship. And they were right – I see it in my work, where I have to keep making new contacts, communicate. It's a good thing to have the trail slightly blazed before you, someone who knows you, someone advising you. Personal contacts in Israel are very important. When people meet for example for coffee or a working lunch, which could easily be a sandwich in the corner bistro, they are creating a quite different relationship than if they were resolving things by e-mail or telephone. Many interesting projects have been formed thanks to this kind of informality. Of course if I am negotiating as the embassy representative, they treat me with respect. But even at that moment, what is more interesting to the Israeli is what you think about things, how you are prepared to negotiate, what you want to achieve, than the academic title on your business card. They go straight to the core of the problem, they do not sweat the small stuff, they try to focus on what is important.

**— Already at a young age you are living your dream to work in diplomacy, abroad. How could you better fulfil your dreams?**

I am really happy that I can do what I am doing. My work is dynamic. The world around me, even the scientific world, is in constant flux, which is reflected in my work. I like the fact that the content of my work is varied and I get to keep meeting new people and challenges. At the same time, I am grateful that such a professional chance and such responsibility were given to me at my age. Every job has its downsides, however, which are not immediately apparent. Sometimes you invest so much energy and effort into something which nobody sees. Occasionally there are the somewhat uncomfortable things like moving house, and everything that goes with raising a family abroad. Otherwise, I can't complain. I also appreciate that my university thinks of me. Maybe it sounds like a catchphrase, but I am truly honoured that the rector invited me to the Alumni Reunion. I have a special place in my heart for Olomouc and its university, no matter where I happen to be. I love to return, and I love being part of the university community.

**— What helps you manage your work on the personal front?**

Without the support of my family, parents, and siblings keeping a discrete eye on me, I would never be able to accomplish this work. My husband helps out a lot. It is very lucky in this profession to find a partner who understands and supports you. Time off is also very important, a person needs to know when to take a break. I'm a dog person, I love taking walks with our greyhound. And after months spent abroad, I treasure my roots even more. A walk around Hanušovice and the lovely Jeseníky environs often recharges my batteries more than an exotic holiday. I'm happy that I have a home to go back to and that there are people there worth returning to. Family and friends are important anchors for me, no matter whether they are in Hanušovice, Olomouc, London, or New York. We keep in touch.


**— Are you planning for your future?**

For the time being my entire future is filled with the work I am doing now. I would like for example to make possible visits this year to Palacký by Israeli personalities who could lecture to students. That is why I am glad that in October, with Prof Lach's help, we will welcome Dan Scheuftan – a renowned Israeli expert on national security and former advisor to the Israeli prime minister – to Olomouc. And Olomouc is connected to one of my personal obligations: I want to finish my doctoral studies. But otherwise planning my future is tough – I'd love to continue in the diplomatic service, but for the time being I am living (as you said) my dream.



Delana Mikolášová and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Jiří Lach

*"I have a special place in my heart for Olomouc and its university, no matter where I happen to be. I love to return, and I love being part of the university community."*



testing centre

text: Martin Višňa  
photos: Jan Volf, Martin Višňa

# BALUO: Bases of Application Life Utilities Olomouc

The university campus at Neředín has been stamped with the hallmark of uniqueness. The Faculty of Physical Culture (FPC) has completed its Application Centre BALUO, which might seem at first like an ordinary complex of athletic halls and a pool. But in actuality, it is a modern science-technology park aimed at the support of a healthy lifestyle and movement, absolutely one-of-a-kind in Czechia.

Components of its uniqueness were gradually revealed during its test run, for example during the university's Open House, when prospective students could examine the test pool facility, although they could not see the cameras which are used to analyse swimmers' movements. There are sensors located throughout the test halls, including a ski trainer with adjustable slope and speed, a "smart" fitness centre, and a climbing wall.

The heart of the modern complex is of course the diagnostic studio for physical culture. "Because at present the level of physical activity is declining in the population, lots of people do not even know how to properly exercise. When they try, they often hurt themselves, rather than being rewarded by physical activity. So AC BALUO offers a helping hand – we'd like to explain to people, clearly and simply, what the state of their body is, and



then based upon that, to recommend individual physical activities with respect to their physical and psychological state, and also according to their habits and what they enjoy,” said Ilona Hapková, Director of the Centre.

### The essential starting line

It doesn't matter whether you are talking about a schoolchild, a working adult, a senior, a person with a handicap, a weekend athlete or a top athlete: AC BALUO is for anyone who is interested in taking part in research in the area of an active lifestyle. What is essential is finding out where one's "starting line" is. All a person has to do is to go there, fill out a questionnaire which will provide their experts with basic information, and then go through a diagnostic package according to their recommendations, one's needs and goals.

“After determining the actual status, i.e. one's starting line, the client can choose a physical activity or we can recommend one. The client can consult us about their movement programme and complete it in the areas in our centre. We place the emphasis on the individual needs of a given person and the length of the programme. We would like people to get to know their bodies, to take care of them, and follow their development with our expert help and better their physical fitness. We expect to cooperate with people who want to start to take care of themselves and protect themselves from the onset of the civilizational diseases of our modern era,” Hapková added.

At the same time, centre clients become anonymous components of the centre's research. The recorded data will help im-

prove the quality of preventive care for all social groups.

### Smart technology

Interesting cooperation is also taking place in the large testing hall, which is being monitored by a unique geolocation system by the Sewio firm. It is more precise than standard GPS and can be used to monitor and measure movement of players on the court with the precision of centimetres.

Smart technologies are also used in the fitness centre with an area of over 300 m<sup>2</sup>, which contains all essential zones for the development of muscle power and physical fitness. All a visitor has to do is go up to the specific machine with their chip, and the machine will set the level of difficulty according to the visitor's individual programme.

The Application Centre BALUO, construction of which was supported by a grant from the Operational Programme “Enterprise and Innovations”, was officially opened on 11 November 2016, by representatives of Palacký University and notable public figures from throughout the country. Hundreds of interested people were attracted to the evening's diagnostic-sport programme.

There was yet another event on the same day, which attracted significantly less attention, but which will lead to further improvements in the FPC facilities – and not only for research. A contract was concluded with the developer of the Centre for Kinanthropology Research building, which will be converted from a former military laundry standing in close proximity to the Application Centre BALUO. It should be completed by the end of 2017.



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Regional Development Fund  
Operational Programme Enterprise  
and Innovations for Competitiveness



AC BALUO ski “slope” tested by former Czech Olympic team alpine skier Martin Vráblík



Students from the UP “Children's University” were also welcomed at AC BALUO

# Chomoutov's alchemy of beer

What do you think – can one compare having a successful firm listed on the New York Stock Exchange to pouring a beer in a small Haná village? No, that's a bit ridiculous. But not if you have had both success in a multinational firm and also at making your own beer. We're talking about Jiří Omelka, manager, brewmaster, and co-owner of the Chomout brewery in Olomouc-Chomoutov... and a Palacký University graduate.



text: Ivana Pustějovská  
photo: Gabriela Knýblová



The Chomout  
brewery also brews  
the original ale of  
Palacký University:  
UP Ale



We're sitting at a table in the brewery pub. Don't imagine when we say brewery we are talking about some gigantic plant with dozens of workers in overalls and trucks full of beer leaving every minute. Not here. We're sitting in a quiet building covered with ivy on the village main road. In the courtyard there are small technical premises where the beer is brewed. Everywhere around me – on the greenhouses, the employees' t-shirts, and on the walls – there is the recognisable trademark of the brewery – a horse. Well, horse... more like something between a dinosaur, a dragon and a horse. At any rate, a symbol which, in the two and a half years' existence of the microbrewery, has etched its place firmly into people's minds.

### From aeroplanes to the global stock market

"Most people think we're a much older firm," smiles Jiří Omelka, at the table. He entered the brewing business together with his friend Jarda Švarc. At that time he had already had a successful career behind him in personnel at several multinational companies. His life story pretty well sums up today's era, when a person can try out a number of professions. But one basic condition has to be fulfilled first – one has to be eager to try and learn new things.

Jiří, who was born in Jarošov, studied at the aviation middle school and was set for a career as a mechanic. The rest of his life would be spent in the aeroplane manufacturing plant in Kunovice. But he decided to continue his studies, and chose Psychology at the Faculty of Arts in Olomouc. Already during his studies he realised that rather than a psychologist, he would be better off in the profession which goes by the initials HR on people's CVs – Human Resources, i.e. working with people, their selection, evaluation, etc. He worked for several firms, including managing a multinational corporation. "We were able to get our firm listed on the New York Stock Exchange, a huge success for us," he remembers. But the price of success came high. In a firm with branches on all continents,

working "from – to" doesn't work, because it is always "from – to" somewhere else. So forever on the phone, in airports, in the car. "It was great, an unbelievable, inspirational atmosphere, but we had three small daughters and I didn't want to spend so much time travelling."

### Distillation experiments

When a friend told him he wanted to open a pub and microbrewery in Chomoutov, he was interested. "For a long time I had been flirting with various alcoholic distillations, from fruit wines to mead to beer." It was the latter which finally got him. "I didn't drink beer until I was probably thirty. And even now I am not your typical beer drinker. I like to taste it, but I guess I prefer wine, coming as I do from wine country," he laughs. Chomout is a family firm, with five permanent employees. "We're a small brewery, we produce four thousand hectolitres of beer annually," he tells me in the warehouse, carrying a sack of grain. By the way, Jiří Omelka must hoist each sack of grain several times before his lager pours from the pipes.

Brewing beer is a little like alchemy – microbreweries like Chomout come up with their own brews, creating herbal beers, chilli beers, melon beers, lavender beers.... Jiří enjoys experimentation. "Sometimes they're one-offs, we have a hundred-litre tank where I experiment. These are not beers for everyone, just aficionados. Our best-selling beer is a traditional lager, which makes up sixty percent of our production." He conducts many of his own experiments, sometimes giving advice to experienced brewers, be they in Czechia or on another continent. When he thinks about what the university prepared him for, it's easy. "School taught me to say what I want, where I want to go, what I need to do something, whom I need, whom to learn from, and what I'm doing it for. And that is true regardless of the professions I have been in," says a man who sometimes enjoys just taking a look around the local at those who are drinking the golden brew with the weird horse on the glass.

# The university choir: affair of the heart

It is close to 6 pm and dozens of people are rushing through the gloomy streets. Many of them share a destination. They're headed for the Palacký University Arts Centre. They run up the stairs to the third floor and enter the well-lit Baroque choir hall. They've reached their destination. They have come to the regular rehearsal of Ateneo, the university choir.

They greet each other, take out their sheet music, and start warming up. Among them is Michaela Rudolfová, a student of English. "I enjoy singing very much. It's fulfilling. Also, I always have a good time with the people here. To be honest, none of us can even imagine what we'd be doing had we not joined the choir. Ateneo is an affair of the heart for everyone here," she confesses. The slender brunette has many years of experience in Ateneo. She's been singing since childhood. After graduating from high school, she left Ústí nad Labem to study in Olomouc, and despite being quite far from home, she never stopped singing. "Music is a sort of mental relaxation to me. And even though we all take it quite seriously, that doesn't mean we don't have our share of laughs," says the university student,

who is also the choir's chair. Ateneo has its own student body. This allows students to have a say in what and how the choir is going to sing. "Our choir master has the final word, of course," Michaela emphasizes.

Singing with a choir can unite people of various vocations and courses of study. While Michaela studies English, her choir-mate Michal Kolář studies IT and music culture. "I've been singing from a young age but when I first met Pavel Režný and he had me sing the seemingly simple song 'Já do lesa nepojedu' (I Will Not Go into the Forest), I became a bit uncertain. He tested my ability to sing in different keys. The intonation was what was important," the newcomer, who sings tenor in the choir, recalls. He considers himself to be more of a rocker. He plays the piano and also sang in several bands. And although the music he plays leans toward rock, he sings almost everything in the choir. "It's excellent voice conditioning," Michal adds.

The clock's ticking, it's a little after six. The rehearsal begins. The hall resounds with dozens of voices. Apart from students, I also see singers who don't quite fit in age-

wise. "Many members of the choir start out as students and stay even after they've graduated college," Pavel Režný from the Department of Music Education, UP Faculty of Education, explains. This is the man who's been leading Ateneo for fifteen years. He is the choir's leading personality.

"We have a varied repertoire. We sing both old and modern music, from songs by Gioacchino Rossini to Jan Vičar or Antonín Tučapský. My favorite author is Jiří Pavlica," Pavel Režný, the choir-master-and-music-theorist-in-one explains. It was Jiří Pavlica and his musical ensemble Hradištan that the choir performed with at the Alumni Reunion. "We were glad to be able to sing with both Hradištan and Leona Machálková. The choir found it incredibly inspiring to be working with such professionals," Režný adds. When asked whether he feels limited by his singers' duration of study, he smiles. "The choir is being held together by the desire to sing, the atmosphere, and the company of like-minded folks. I'm convinced nothing will change on that front going into the future," Pavel Režný believes.



Ateneo, the mixed choir of Palacký University Olomouc, is the recipient of a number of awards. Performing since 2001, it holds its rehearsals in a space provided by the Department of Music Education at the Faculty of Education. It represents Palacký University at conferences and concerts in the Czech Republic and abroad. The choir has performed in the Netherlands, Turkey, Hungary, Norway, and the United States. The concert ensemble consists of 35 singers.





# School gardens of Eden

text: Velena Mazochová  
photos: Marcela Krejčí archive

**Marcela Krejčí's dream of visiting Africa came true twice. What she found there was not just the purpose of volunteer work but also the value of ordinary interpersonal relationships and a simple approach to life. What she also found in East Africa was a fitting topic for her M.A. thesis.**

Marcela with girls who are part of the Child Sponsorship Programme in the Otungang-Girls elementary school in Paidha, Uganda.

Fascinated with Africa since high school, Marcela initially wanted to become a war correspondent or to fight the spread of HIV. In the end, she ended up at the CARITAS – College of Social Work Olomouc and at the same time, at the Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology of Palacký University, where she is currently finishing her M.A. studies in the International Humanitarian and Social Work study programme.

## First time – of many?

The first time Marcela used the opportunity to stay in Africa was during the second year of her B.A. studies. She spent five months in northwest Uganda to acquire mandatory months of work experience. The place where her dream first

came true was called Nebbi. She worked in the town with a population of 36 000 as a volunteer in the Child Sponsorship Programme of the Archdiocese of Prague Caritas.

While working with the local chapter of the Caritas, she visited schools and families of Ugandan children and helped them with letters to their Czech sponsors. She also updated their profiles. “Sometimes it was necessary to remove children’s names from the programme because they moved away. Some girls were also married and pregnant at, say, 13 years of age. We also unfortunately had to deal with the CAN syndrome, child abuse and neglect,” the Olomouc student describes. She organised inter-

active workshops as well. At these workshops, children learned how to recognise the symptoms of widespread infectious diseases such as cholera or malaria, or how to follow the rules of hygiene.

“Since then, I have always wanted to go back to Africa,” Marcela says, even despite the fact that she herself was unable to avoid one of the serious risks – malaria rendered her unable to work for over a week. It returned later on. Marcela sees even this experience in a positive light – she had the opportunity to test the local healthcare system, although she initially feared hospitalisation. “They took great care of me. My colleagues, our cook, and the nuns who lived at the hospital took turns in tending to me,” she recalls with a sense of relief. →



## M.A. thesis: School Gardens in Kenya

She travelled to Africa again in March 2016. This time to Kenya, for a three-month internship at the ShineBean organisation. She spent her time at the Barchando and Gobey schools observing how the school garden project aids food safety and poverty reduction. Kenyans and Ugandans, Marcela says, rely mainly on financial support from abroad. It is, however, important for them to learn how to take care of themselves. The project of building gardens on school grounds provides an opportunity to do so. "The schools can grow everything they need. In Barchando, children eat lunch prepared from their own resources thanks to their school garden. They keep hens and sheep together and they grow essential vegetables, corn, and beans. The school is also a market for the local community. It makes a profit which can go toward funds that allow pupils to, for example, continue their studies in high school."

In Kenya, Marcela experienced the everyday life of a village family while living with one. This included a lack of water, low standards of hygiene and safety, and "accommodation" with rats and cockroaches. "It was difficult at first, but it was necessary. It allows you to move forward, to find out what your limits are, and to realise you can handle way more than you'd thought." Close contact with specific people also allowed Marcela to get to know local conditions better. "It means that I can be more efficient at helping and also that I can pro-

vide more informed information at home. It gives purpose to both my studies and my future," she affirms.

## Culture shock? After returning to Europe

East Africa, with its rich culture of many ethnic groups, is now an affair of the heart for Marcela. That's not the only reason why she keeps coming back, though. She also misses the locals' mentality, the beautiful nature, and the simple, albeit difficult everyday life. Marcela does not hide her excitement. "The people there consider family to be very important. In place of a social security system, they simply must rely on each other. This means that interpersonal relationships are more important and also closer than here. They live simple lives, which I guess also existed here a long time ago. They're always smiling, they're never in a rush, they enjoy day-to-day life. And all this despite the many dangers and risks. When you live in a village, you're in much closer contact with nature, which is beautiful there," she enthuses.

It is because of this that Marcela always finds returning home more difficult than one would think. "You adapt to different conditions after about three months. After that, you're ready to live in that culture. But that's suddenly interrupted and you go back to European stress. No one smiles at you here, no one asks how you're doing, and you generally only communicate thanks to your phone. That's why I experience culture shock rather upon returning to Europe," Marcela Krejčí says.

## Marcela Krejčí (b. 1991)

She spent a total of eight months in Uganda and Kenya as an intern in the Child Sponsorship Programme of the Archdiocese of Prague Caritas and the ShineBean organisation. She worked for five years as a volunteer for Maltese Aid, Caritas Olomouc and the Archdiocese of Olomouc Caritas. She currently works as an intern in the Prague centre of the People in Need organisation, where she has a part in projects in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Myanmar and Cambodia. In the spring, she plans to travel to Ethiopia, where she was selected to work as a coordinator of the UN's volunteer programme.

Like every coin, Kenya too has two sides – a better side and a worse side. It's up to you which side you choose to focus on, and in what light you remember this beautiful country.



Marcela in a dress from traditional Kenyan textiles with her colleague – an Evangelical minister who helps self-supporting groups and small farmers.



Marcela in Kenya with a group of women who help protect children and adults from the jigger flea – a parasite living in dirt, attacking peoples' feet.



text: Eva Hrudníková  
photos: Gabriela Knýblová

graduate

## Lenka Konrádová:

Each morning  
I have to look  
myself in the  
mirror





#### **Lenka Konrádová (b. 1972)**

She graduated from the UP Faculty of Law in 1996. Three years later she was nominated as a judge by President Václav Havel. She is a former Chairwoman of the Board of the District Court in Olomouc. In 2006 she completed a stay at the Ostrava Regional Court. In mid-2010 she became a permanent judge at the Olomouc branch of the latter court; she is a member of the Board of Appeals specialising in traffic laws.

**“When a person is appointed a judge, tremendous power is put into their hands. And that power must be handled very carefully, and exercised humbly,” says Lenka Konrádová. She knows of what she speaks. A graduate of the UP Faculty of Law, and currently a judge at the Olomouc division of the Ostrava Regional Court, she has been exercising that power for almost twenty years.**

She admits that law – specifically criminal law – is something that has attracted her since she finished grammar school. “Criminal law fascinated me due to its content. I am interested in people and their fates. I was also attracted by the possibility of trying to do something – in some way – so that people will not carry out criminal acts.” Thanks to her focus on the goal, hard work and, as she says herself, favourable circumstances, she has been able to make good on that front. “I am doing work which interests me, and continues to interest me. Even after all the years and experiences I have behind me.”

After graduating university and a brief stint in a law firm, she became a trainee judge at the District Court in Olomouc. She passed her judicial exams and finally entered her awaited criminal law. Although she cannot recall her first decision with exactitude, she remembers her first years in her judge’s robes as tough and extremely difficult. “Getting used to, and moreover becoming accustomed to, the fact that I am making decisions on guilt and criminality, was by no means easy. My work was with me both day and night,” Lenka Konrádová remembers, and adds, “I believe that a person in this profession has to adopt a certain routine.” She was a judge at the district criminal court for ten years and also specialised in criminal law and traffic.

#### **Respect for the courts lacking**

Within the halls of justice, she has decided cases with media attention, such as the death of a schoolgirl on a trampoline, the embezzlement by the mayor of Štěpánov, and steroid smuggling into the prison in Mírov. “I have never felt that the media should in some way influence my decisions. Or that because of it, I ought to try harder. I have always tried to make peace with myself over my decisions.” If she could, she would plead for greater media attention to those responsible for traffic accidents. “When I started, most criminal offences regarding traffic were due to negligence. Today however, there are more and more cases which are deliberate, as road rage increases. Behaviour in traffic is a reflection on our society. And a suitable use for the media would be prevention,” the judge asserts.

According to her, the dire state of today’s society is closely connected to the courts’ authority. “I do not have a good feeling about the disrespect for the rules of good behaviour, let alone regulations and laws. People are losing their respect for the courts. They have no problems about entering the halls of justice in sweatpants or shorts. At first they will address you with re-

spect, but if you deny their appeals, they will cease,” she emphasises.

If asked to define a “good” judge, it would not take her long. She believes that success in this profession is very difficult to gauge. “A judge must have a certain feeling for fairness within themselves. A person is born with this, and during their life it is raised and developed. A person must have a healthy sense of self-awareness and courage,” she believes. And how difficult is it for her to judge? “I try to judge in a way so that I have a good feeling about my work, in order to look myself in the mirror each morning. I have to know that I have done the maximum, that I have clarified the case, and that I have judged according to the evidence and to the best of my knowledge and in good conscience.”

One other thing is important for her – knowing how to relax. “Without relaxation? Impossible. Sport refreshes me,” says the exquisite tennis player, skier, badminton player, cyclist, skater....

#### **Proud Olomoucian**

Her professional career has been influenced by a number of favourable circumstances. For example the re-establishment of the UP Faculty of Law in 1991. Lenka Konrádová is a graduate of its first class, some 20 years ago. “Although I am an Olomoucian, and a proud one at that, I had to go to university elsewhere. When I finished my high school studies in 1990, the Faculty of Law was no longer here,” she explains why she began to study law in Bratislava. “My studies there were connected with constant travelling to and from school, classes were held in Slovak, in short the negatives of studying in Slovakia were exchanged for the positives of studying in Olomouc when the Faculty of Law was re-established, allowing me to return to my native Olomouc. On top of that there was the break-up of Czechoslovakia.”

And it was a lucky step. Only sixty students were accepted into the first class of the re-established school. “The time and the atmosphere were really something. The lesser number of students allowed a more individual approach on the teachers’ part, which I consider a huge plus for us.” The first dean, Miroslav Liberda, plays a big role in her memories. “He was a teacher with a human side and the school was in his blood.”

Lenka Konrádová has never lost contact with her alma mater over the years. She continues to cooperate with the faculty, as a thesis advisor and as a guarantor of student internships at the Olomouc branch of the Ostrava Regional Court. “So that I can at least somewhat repay what the school gave me during my studies.”



text: Vělena Mazochová  
photo: Lukáš Navara

foundation



Vladimír Mihál, Denis Dvořák  
and Marián Hajdúch

# Medicine helped him. Now he helps others.

Three men, one photograph. A doctor, a student of medicine who has been successfully treated for leukaemia, and a scientist have lent their faces to the foundation Rakovina věc veřejná (Cancer is a Public Affair), whose campaign to support research of tumorous diseases was supported by select Czech media. It combined not only an attempt to address the general public, but also a happy story of overcoming an insidious disease, thanks to the most modern therapeutic methods and approaches.



Rakovina věc veřejná  
NADACE PRO VÝZKUM RAKOVINY

To increase the awareness of the public on oncological research was a group decision by the third-year student of general medicine, Denis Dvořák; the Head of the Olomouc Children's Clinic, Vladimír Mihál; and the Director of the Institute of Molecular and Translational Medicine at the UP Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (UP FMD IMTM), Marián Hajdúch. "By means

of a campaign we wanted to make the area of support visible, which abroad is massively funded from private and charitable sources. At the same time, we drew attention to the existence of a foundation which co-finances tumour research. Many people have contributed to it, but we believe that in Czechia this area and its potential are still greater," says Marián Hajdúch.

→

### Return to a full life

When Denis Dvořák was two and a half, he fell ill with acute lymphatic leukaemia, the basic treatment method for which is chemotherapy. "Like every oncological disease, it is serious. It greatly depends on the prognostic signs and proper diagnostics. And our surgery is one of the best in the country, due to excellent cytogenetics," explains Vladimír Mihál, emphasising: "Denis luckily had what is called a standard type of acute lymphatic leukaemia, and so we knew that unless something unusual would happen, it could be treated."

As with the majority of child patients, Denis's treatment lasted two years. In the first six months he went through intensive "protocol" treatment in the hospital. "This is based on intravenous application of different types of cytostatics," Mihál explains. For another six months of maintenance therapy he would go to the clinic once a month. "It is a still very demanding treatment consisting of two cytostatics, but it is administered orally. At the same time we monitor the patient carefully, praying with them that the treatment will be successful," says Mihál.

Denis did not feel that the disease had a marked influence on his childhood, nor does he follow any special regime today. "Aside from regular check-ups at my general practitioner, I live like everybody else, without barriers." His personal experience with a serious illness however perhaps influenced his view of himself and the world around him. "I think that I've realised what

matters most. At any rate, since finishing treatment I have never had any serious illnesses, nor do I think someone ought to be caring for me."

### Repaying a debt

However he has been offering his help as a member of the Šance (Chance) Olomouc citizen's cooperative, which tries to help children undergoing demanding anti-tumoral treatment and in their return to ordinary life. Denis Dvořák has been involved in various activities since his childhood, and since he was eighteen he has worked as one of the leaders of summer and winter camps, which he himself used to go to as a child. "I'd like to contribute in my modest way to the work of the cooperative. Maybe it's like repaying a debt, but most of all, I enjoy it," says Denis.

### R&D – The basic requirement for successful treatment

According to Mihál, the success rate in the treatment of acute leukaemia has increased significantly in the last two decades. "Only twenty years ago, the survival rate for acute childhood leukaemia was only 10–15%. The overall survival rate of such patients today in Olomouc is 95%."

And as Marián Hajdúch emphasises, research and development of new treatment methods and approaches has played a large part in this positive trend: "Research is always in its infancy. But if you do not carry it out, nor support it, the test results will bear that out. You have to begin sooner than later."

### Rakovina věc veřejná (Cancer is a Public Affair) – The Olomouc Cancer

**Research Foundation**, was founded in 1997 as the first non-profit organisation in the Czech Republic to support research and development in the area of tumorous diseases. It is also aimed at the primary and secondary prevention of malignant tumours and other serious civilisational diseases. At the same time it contributes to the fostering and further education of experts and to providing standard and non-standard medical and scientific equipment. It also develops intensive educational activities via its information-prevention projects intended for the general public. It directly supports the science and research being carried out at the state-of-the-art workplaces at the UP FMD IMTM.



### Cancer research supported by a book of fairy tales

Famous celebrities decided to support research into tumorous diseases by an original method, writing a book of "Dedicated Fairy Tales". Ten original stories from the pens of Dr Josef Koutecký, biathlon athlete Gabriela Koukalová, comedian Lukáš Pavlášek, singer Ester Kočíčková, and actor Igor Bareš, with illustrations by Carolyn Gad, was published by the Cancer Research Foundation in a bilingual Czech-English edition.





## reflections

photo:  
Gabriela Knýblová

**Yogeeta Dahal** was the first Bhutanese student in Czechia. Her three-month study stay at the UP Faculty of Science was the result of cooperation between the Department of Development Studies and the Royal University of Bhutan, within the auspices of the Erasmus+ programme. She studies Management of Natural Resources at her home university.

### ཨོ་ལོ་མོ་ཀུ་ན་གཞིན་གྱི་ཤེས་ཡོན་སྦྱང་སའི་ས་གནས།

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བཞིན་ཆེ།

### Olomouc – A place for young people

*I am happy that I could come here, thanks to the Erasmus+ programme. Your university is vast, with colleges and departments spread out across the city, quite different from the university in Bhutan. Because I was the only student from Bhutan, I had the opportunity to introduce our university and I was thrilled at the interest in my country. The UP Faculty of Science and the people who work at the university treated me in a very friendly fashion, making me feel welcome here.*

*Olomouc is a university town, one dominated by young and energetic people. The weather surprised me, as it was quite unpredictable: warm sunny mornings, cloudy afternoons, and cold, windy evenings. The bright orange fallen leaves added another touch of beauty to the place. The city of Olomouc is alive both day and night. For young people it is simply a perfect place for living, education, and exploration. The city will not leave you be, neither spiritually nor physically. And even if you are occupied with lectures and studying, there are still a lot of other things you can do: take an evening walk and get to know the surroundings, make friends with other students on exchange programmes with whom you can exchange opinions on various cultural traditions, take part in diverse events, and of course explore the city and visit different places. During my short stay, so many things took place that there was no time to be lazy!*

*Thanks!*

# "Francjosef" and Olomouc

Last year marked the centenary of the death of the Austrian emperor and ruler of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1867, Franz Joseph I, born 18 August 1830 in the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, where he also died on 21 November 1916. The Olomouc Regional History Museum marked the centenary with an exhibition entitled "Franz Joseph I in Olomouc".

## Imperial visits

Olomouc played an important role in the life of this 68-year reigning monarch; he visited it ten times. During his third visit, on 2 December 1848 in the Olomouc Archbishop's Palace, he took charge of the Austrian Empire, the power passed to him by the abdication of his uncle, Emperor Ferdinand I (1793–1875), and the renunciation of the throne by his father, Archduke Franz Karl (1802–1878). On one hand, the name of Emperor Franz Joseph I is attached to the decrees which gradually (and finally, in 1860) shut down Kaiser Franz University in Olomouc, instigated by the Austrian Minister of Religion and Education, Leopold, Count von Thun und Hohenstein, (1811–1888); on the other hand, the Emperor in 1867 allowed the establishment of two Slavonic

gymnaziums in Moravia, in Brno and Olomouc. On 5 August 1872 the monarch was in attendance for a portion of the final exams in Olomouc's Slavonic Gymnazium, at that time located at 3 Purkrabská Street.

## Healthcare by "Herr Kaiser"

The Kaiser's history in Olomouc is not confined to educational institutions, but also includes healthcare. Recall that on 1 April 1892, the Moravian Diet in Brno resolved, acting on a proposal by Olomouc delegate August Weeber, to build a new hospital in Olomouc, a complex of pavilions on Tabulový Hill, in what was at that time the separate community of Neugasse; the original budget came to 600 thousand Gulden.

The first pavilion of the Moravian Regional Hospital was built from 1894–1896, and handed over to the management on 19 August 1896; out of a total of 268 beds, 105 were for internal medicine, 95 for surgery, 56 for ophthalmology, and 12 for infectious diseases. On 14 September 1896, patients from the prior hospital, currently the site of the UP Faculty of Arts at 10 Křížkovského Street, were transferred to the new facility, and on 16 November of that year opening ceremonies for the first pavilion were held.

Gynaecology and the Maternity Ward had to wait for their own pavilion until 28 December 1899; other pavilions were built in the years following.

The commemorative plaque in the vestibule is still there and the Latin inscription can be translated as follows: "The reigning Emperor Franz Joseph I ordered the Diet of the Margraviate of Moravia by decree dated 1 April 1892 to construct this building for treatment of the infirm."



Now this building, which the staff of the Olomouc University Hospital call "Francjosef" and is designated B1 and B2 on its maps, houses the Geriatric Ward. We hope the commemorative plaque will survive the scheduled complete renovation of the oldest pavilion of the hospital and will continue to remind all of the magnanimous investment into healthcare for the inhabitants of Olomouc and its greater environs by "Herr Kaiser".

## "Greetings from Olomouc" – Moravian Regional Hospital.

Postcard, J. Werner, Olomouc, pre-1909.









Palacký University  
Olomouc

*Genius loci...*

## SHORT PROGRAMMES AND SUMMER SCHOOLS

### Common features of our short programmes and summer schools

- Excellent courses taught by experienced teachers
- UP repeatedly scores high in international rankings
- Programmes can be tailored to meet the needs of a partner institution (a summer school can be easily transformed into a winter school or "Maymester")
- We can arrange field trips to many interesting destinations. Students can visit exciting cities such as Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Krakow, Venice and other attractive places.
- Participants enjoy the beauties of our historical city of Olomouc, many cultural activities and sightseeing visits included in the programme
- Students experience university life through numerous events, trips and extracurricular activities

*Interested? We will be more than happy to discuss the needs of your students and prepare a tailored programme for you!*

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