

Guest Editorial

Highlight: 29th Winter School on Proteinases and Their Inhibitors

The idea of Winter School was born in 1981 out of a collaboration of Vito Turk (Jožef Stefan Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia) and Hans Fritz (Department of Clinical Chemistry and Clinical Biochemistry at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, Germany) to provide a scientific forum where brand-new, unpublished, and even preliminary results are presented, discussed, and ideas are developed in a relaxed and creative atmosphere. In particular, young scientists are encouraged to give their debutant lectures in front of both their peers and renowned experts. While the first 13 Winter Schools on 'Proteinases and Their Inhibitors – Recent Developments' alternated between Slovenia/former Yugoslavia, Bavaria, and Southern Tyrol, subsequent meetings were permanently held in Tiers, Southern Tyrol/Italy. After the retirement of Hans Fritz as the main organizer, Marianne Jochum chaired the 20–29th Winter Schools from 2003 to 2012. Within this decade, Winter School expanded and evolved into an international meeting because of the participation of both European and internationally leading experts in the protease field who joined the meetings together with their students, and became enthusiastic members of the growing Winter School family. Marianne Jochum and the (co-) organizers are grateful to all of them for their friendship and their continuing participation and creative input to the benefit of the next scientific generation.

This Highlight Issue of *Biological Chemistry* contains a review and nine original research articles that emerged from the 29th Winter School on Proteinases and Their Inhibitors, 29 February to 4 March, 2012. Over 120 participants from seven European and five overseas countries

enjoyed a lively program of 70 talks themed around recent results in proteolysis research that were mainly presented by doctoral and postdoctoral students. The topics reflect the still growing diversity of the field, and included, for example: structure/function relationships of proteases and their inhibitors; their roles in physiology as well as disease states such as cancer, neurodegeneration and infectious diseases; their use as diagnostic markers and drug targets; and methodological aspects, e.g., proteomics and degradomics to unravel proteolytic mechanisms, pathways and networks. The set of articles included in this issue is obviously only a small selection of some of the current research topics. We thank Boris Turk, Executive Editor of *Biological Chemistry*, who handled most of the articles published in this issue, and the Managing Editor of the journal, Torsten Krüger. We would also like to thank the contributors for their manuscripts and all the colleagues who helped in the review process. Finally, our thanks go to all the Winter Scholars for their continuing support of the Winter School.

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