

70th Anniversary for Professor Venko Beschkov, DSc



With this issue of the Bulgarian Chemical Communications we celebrate the 70th birthday of Professor Venko Beschkov and mark his considerable contributions to the chemical and biochemical engineering in Bulgaria. Many are the

important benchmarks of Prof. Beschkov's outstanding career and the results of his scientific endeavors are varied and it is difficult to select the most worthy of note in this brief overview.

Venko graduated from Sofia University with an MSc in Inorganic Chemistry with first class honors and since 1969 he has been affiliated with the Institute of Chemical Engineering, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences whose Director he was from 1993 till his retirement.

In 1978 Venko was awarded a PhD for the successful defence of his thesis: "Influence of some surface phenomena on mass transfer in liquid film flows". In 1996 he presented and defended his Doctor of Science Thesis "Kinetics and importance of mass transfer in some fermentation processes by free and immobilized biocatalysts", which summarized his research in the field of biochemical kinetics and biochemical reactors.

Venko has authored and co-authored two monographs, seven chapters in books (and encyclopedia) and 187 scientific articles published in international journals which have been cited more than 1200 times. His research achievements are highly recognized abroad and he has established, supported and actively participated in several efficient international collaborations with colleagues from Belgium, The United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Georgia, etc. which have spawned further networking.

In the years 1991/1992 Prof. Beschkov was appointed Deputy to the Minister of Environment of the Bulgarian Government. Besides the many duties and obligations during this period, the everyday administration of that challenging Ministry helped him to further expand his overview on the combination of science and environmental issues and gave him new ideas for modern scientific research.

We should, of course, not omit the fact that, as well as being an excellent researcher, Prof. Beschkov is a first-rate teacher and advisor - 29 MSc students and 13 PhD students have benefitted from his utter professionalism and dedicated work ethic, and are now pursuing a scientific carrier in Bulgaria and abroad.

Beschkov has been invited to deliver lectures at the universities in Louvain, Montreal, Hamburg-Harburg, Pretoria, etc., and as a plenary and key-note speaker in different congresses and conferences as well. Furthermore, he has presented different university courses in his area of expertise in the Faculties of Chemistry and Biology of the Sofia University and the University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy in Sofia for more than thirty years.

Because of his scientific curiosity and open mind Venko has never been short of new ideas and shy of their practical application. His patents were recently recognized at the 9th International Invention Fair in the Middle East, Kuwait (2017), where they were awarded a silver and a bronze medal, respectively. His name is in the list of Honorable Inventors of the Bulgarian Patent Office Golden Book, and in 2014 Venko was awarded with the "Golden Coin of Letters" for science issued by the Club of the Bulgarian Scientific and Cultural Élite.

In 1996 Venko was elected an Editor in Chief of the Bulgarian Chemical Communications. Some of his characteristics that have shaped him as an outstanding scientist – perseverance, precision, practicality, action, tolerance to even the most outrageous views of colleagues and co-workers, and a wonderful sense of humor helped him immensely in turning the modest at that time "national" journal to the nowadays well recognized international journal with an Impact Factor.

Venko is also very actively involved in shaping the new avenues in chemical engineering in Bulgaria by participating in different National and international councils, committees, etc., and last but not least as serving as a Head of the Union of Chemists of Bulgaria for more than 8 years. His achievements, demonstrated strategic and leadership qualities are acknowledged and recognized by the Bulgarian Academy of Science and he was recently awarded the Honorary Sign "Marin Drinov" on ribbon.

Dear Venko, seventy years of age are just the present fifty... they mark a new beginning. So, enjoy

life, rock-and-roll and classical music, vacations and sight-seeing with your wonderful family and many other pursuits! Moreover that now you have some real quality time for research which you so much appreciate.

Many happy returns, and we, your former students, present colleagues and collaborators will be following and looking towards your new explorations and adventures in science – needless to say it will be worth it!

Prof. Dragomir Yankov

Prof. Roumiana Stateva