

Professor, Academician Ivars Kalvins on his Seventieth Birthday

Professor Ivars Kalvins is best known in the scientific community for his contributions to the discovery of new drug molecules. He is the inventor of the cardioprotective drug meldonium, which was created in Latvia, and has achieved international recognition also as an author of several other promising drug molecules and currently is actively involved in the development of a new type of anticancer drugs. The overall scientific productivity of Professor Kalvins is reflected in more than 400 publications and 170 international patents.

Full member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, Professor Ivars Kalvins was born on June 2, 1947. He graduated from the Faculty of Chemistry of the Latvian State University in 1969, defended his Candidate of Chemical Sciences dissertation in 1976, Doctor of Chemical Sciences dissertation in 1988, and was nostrified as Habilitated Doctor of Chemical Sciences in 1991. Professor Kalvins currently is the Chairman of Scientific Council at the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal "Chemistry of Heterocyclic Compounds" since 2010.

The rise of the scientific career of Professor Kalvins was at the time of major socioeconomic transformations in Latvia and, in parallel with his research interests, there was an organisational duty to convey the scientific competence to the Western colleagues and to gain appropriate standing in the international scientific community.

As a gifted scientist and skillful science manager, Professor Kalvins was able to convince research partners from Germany of the professional ability of his team, and the cooperation that started in 1992 produced a notable result in 1999 – the synthesis and pharmacological characterization of a new drug, neramexane.

At approximately the same time Professor Kalvins initiated a joint research project with scientists from Denmark in the design of histone deacetylase inhibitors with the goal to create a new anticancer drug. Already in 2001 a new drug was discovered at Professor Kalvins laboratory. Now it is named belinostat and approved by U.S. FDA on July 3, 2014 for the treatment of peripheral T-cell lymphoma.

Academician Ivars Kalvins has greatly contributed to the career advancement of many Latvian scientists, by supporting creative, forward-thinking younger colleagues who showed leadership potential. Based on his invitation, molecular pharmacology researcher Dr. Maija Dambrova



returned after defending her dissertation at the Uppsala University in 1999 and became a major driving force in her field in Latvia. It was the collaboration between Professor Kalvins and the Dambrova research group that proved to be instrumental in creation of a next generation cardioprotective drug, which will undergo clinical trials starting in this year.

Professor Kalvins conducts courses on drug development and pharmacology, as well as is member of the Promotion Council of the Riga Technical University.

In parallel with the productive research un teaching activities, Ivars Kalvins is also involved in several nongovernmental organizations. Professor Kalvins is one of the Founding members of the Latvian Innovators Association and serves as its Chairman of the Board. He has been also elected as a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, participates in the Advisory Boards of Riga Stradins University and Riga Technical University, and serves as Chairman of Advisory Board at the Liepaja University.

The working of Professor Ivars Kalvins has been recognized by several significant national and international awards. The most recent and significant of those are a medal by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2005, the Latvian Three Stars Order (2006), an award by Republic of Latvia Cabinet of Ministers (2006), The Large Medal of Latvian Academy of Sciences (2009), Riga Award (2010), Academician A. Kost medal (2015), Walter Zapp award (2015), and JSC Grindeks – Latvian Academy of Sciences joint award "Golden Owl" (2016).

In the name of all colleagues from the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis, students, and cooperation partners we congratulate Professor Kalvins on his major anniversary and wish him a fruitful further scientific and organizational career.