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Prof. Mariapia Viola-Magni – An Appreciation

Munis Dundar, Kevan M.A. Gartland, Peter B. Gahan

Along with good and cheering recent news regarding the future of the European Biotechnology Thematic Network Association (EBTNA) and The EuroBiotech Journal, unfortunately, there is also sad news; the EBTNA family has lost the founder, the heart and soul of the association, a remarkable biotechnologist, an inspiring person for scientists and educationalists – Professor Mariapia Viola-Magni who passed away 8 December 2017.

Mariapia Viola-Magni, born in Pisa the 24 September 1935, was General Pathology Professor from 1975 at Perugia University and Director of the Institute of General Pathology. She graduated in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Pisa with an Honours Degree in 1958, and a PhD Honours in Medicine and Surgery, from the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa in 1960. In 1964, she started as an Assistant Lecturer at the Institute of General Pathology, Pisa University. She was appointed to a full professorship in 1967. She won a NATO Scholarship at the Department of Pharmacology, Oxford University and at the Department of Biophysics, King's College, London in 1965. In 1975, she was appointed to the Chair of General Pathology at Perugia University. She was also the Rector's Delegate for International Affairs at the University of Perugia and participated in many European and International projects. She was a pioneer in the ERASMUS programme and created the School for Technicians, the Doctorate in Cell and Molecular Pathology, and the Consortium of University and Enterprises (TUCEP). From 1976, she developed a network in Biotechnology formed with European support as well as two international courses "Job Creation Oriented Biotechnology" and "Biotechnology Medical Applications". She was The Founding President of the European Biotechnology Thematic Network Association (EBTNA) and President of the non-profit Research Foundation Enrico Puccinelli.

EBTNA is an organization founded in 1996 that presents academic and industrial projects that helps establish links between biotechnology and science. The EBTNA network for biotechnology was created in 2007 by Mariapia Viola-Magni with a legal statute signed by a notary in Perugia.

BIOTECHNET is another project that she pioneered. The ODL modules are a resource of the Association, the first being generated in the framework of the BIOTECHNET project. 46 modules are available on the e-learning platform in the field of biotechnology, covering an entire first level degree course. In the future, EBTNA intends to continue to support and implement technically both the hardware and software infrastructures and to disseminate the available modules.

Her many research contributions should not be forgotten and included cell proliferation *in vivo* and *in vitro*; non-premitotic ("metabolic") DNA synthesis; tumor cell proliferation and oncogene expression; gene expression in hepatocytes during neonatal maturation and liver regeneration; the presence of a phospholipid fraction in hepatocyte chromatin and its metabolism and the presence of DNA in blood and in biological fluids. She collaborated with other members of EBTNA in these researches and contributed to several 'state of the art' keynote presentations at international conferences.

In all Professor Mariapia Viola-Magni published 303 papers most of which are in International Journals. She authored a book "Metodi Quantitativi in Citochimica" and co-authored "Argomenti di Patologia Generale", Terranova-Giordano and "Fisiopatologia Generale", Pontieri.

As you all may already know, EBTNA has organised annual congresses and specialist symposia since 2011 in various European cities and we would like to dedicate the upcoming 'European Biotechnology Congress 2018' that will be held April 26-28, 2018 in Athens, Greece in memory of Professor Mariapia Viola-Magni.

Professor Mariapia Viola-Magni's contributions to the scientific society have been broad, but we thank her especially for her great driving force, her warm and sincere friendship and collaboration. Our thoughts are with her relatives and colleagues. She will be sorely missed by us all. Rest in peace, Mariapia.