

education

A Great Blend of Intellectual and Physical Challenges

Impressions by Isaac P. Witz and Liat Edry-Botzer

One of the major objectives of the German-Israeli cooperation in cancer research is to create a spirit of teamwork and partnership between German and Israeli scientists. This was indeed achieved and a long lasting alliance between senior cancer researchers from both countries does in fact exist. Along with this tradition a winter school for students from the DKFZ and from Israeli universities proved to be a valuable instrument as well.

During a 4-day stay in Pichl, Austria, in early March 2008 senior scientists from Germany and Israel shared their experience and knowledge with eager young researchers. This newly established activity contributed significantly to strengthen and deepen the scientific ties between colleagues from both countries.

“I was privileged to be invited to introduce the domain of ‘Tumor Microenvironment’ to the participants and also to talk about a research project performed in my lab”, says Isaac P. Witz, Professor of Immunology at Tel Aviv University, and adds how much he enjoyed the lively discussion following his presentation and those of his colleagues where he sensed the curiosity of the students to novel ideas and facts. Liat Edry-Botzer, a student from his lab, affirms this: “This



“Non scholae sed vitae” seemed to be the motto during the evening in a cosy ski lodge.

was definitely an extraordinary scientific experience. The scientific program was very well balanced with lectures on different aspects of cancer research. As such, it was a great opportunity to broaden my knowledge”.



After the lectures in the morning everyone enjoyed the marvelous scenery with snowy mountains which was the perfect setting for skiing. This and many other extracurricular activities further contributed to the consolidation of new contacts between young scientists.

The Pichl winter school can be regarded as a great blend of both intellectual and physical challenges. The program of the school was thoughtfully outlined as to accommodate lectures in the morning and in the late afternoon with a long recess for a variety of extracurricular activities, mainly skiing. “We enjoyed the outstanding facilities of the Pichlmayrgut hotel and the ski resort nearby”, says Liat. This created the right circumstances and atmosphere to get familiar with young scientists from Germany, which have become friends and colleagues. A typical example was that of Christiane Meyer, a student from DKFZ, and Liat: “We did not know each other before, but now keep friendly contacts”. Not only personal relations were initiated in Pichl, states Isaac P. Witz. He knows of at least one collaborative project that was conceived during the winter school between a research team at DKFZ and one at an Israeli university.

The winter school in Pichl clearly demonstrated that such undertakings are worthwhile and should be continued: “As one of the participants I hope the winter school will become a traditional scientific event which we all could attend in the future”, says Liat.

Both, Isaac P. Witz and Liat, expressed their sincere gratitude to Professor Thomas Efferth and Professor Wolfhard Semmler for the initiative and for inviting them to this challenging, pleasant and gratifying experience, as this event undoubtedly strengthened the collaboration between Germany and Israel.



Venue of the Winter School

Appreciation was also addressed to Elfriede Mang for her dedication to the German-Israeli Cooperation in Cancer Research and her valuable contributions to the success of the winter school.