

Rhinology, Sofia and freedom

BY DILYANA VICHEVA

Our president-elect and host of the ERS2023 shares her love for ERS, rhinology in general, and Bulgaria. Let her invitation to experience the “freedom to breathe” inspire us all to visit Sophia and enjoy a great congress in a fantastic atmosphere.

“Rhinology is my philosophy for freedom”

Rhinology

What is rhinology? For me, rhinology is my life, my soul, my love, my friendships, my everything! When I am breathing, I am alive; when I am working in rhinology, I am free; when I am studying rhinology, I am happy; when I am organising rhinology meetings, I am growing with my rhinology friends from all over the world. Rhinology is my philosophy for freedom!

Bulgaria

Bulgaria is one of the oldest European countries established in 681 AD. Since then, Bulgaria is the only one that hasn't changed its name. The Cyrillic alphabet became the third official alphabet of the EU, and our country ranks third in Europe for the number of its number of archaeological monuments. There are 10 UNESCO sites: Rila Monastery, Boyana Church, Ancient Plovdiv, Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak, etc. (www.visitmybulgaria.com). We welcome you to Bulgaria to experience not only our traditions and culture, but also our wines, national music, Bulgarian yogurt, the smell of Bulgarian rose oil and the feel of our spirit of friendship.

Sofia

The capital of the Republic of Bulgaria is a unique city that grows but does not get old and has more than 8000 years of history (www.en.wikivoyage.org). Established around a hot mineral spring, at the crossroads of extremely important roads linking Western Europe with Asia Minor, and the Middle East and the Baltic Sea with the Aegean Sea, the city of Sofia has seen and remembers a lot. It is a millennial perseverance, which very few European cities can be proud of. In downtown, Sofia stands the oldest operating church in



Some of the beautiful sights Bulgaria has to offer: (Top L-R) the Rila Monastery, Prohodna Cave, the Shipka Monument; (Bottom L-R) the Patriarchal Cathedral of St Alexander Nevski, the Seven Rila Lakes, and Belogradchik Rocks.

Europe – St George Rotunda. The Patriarchal Cathedral, St Alexander Nevsky, is the largest Orthodox church on the entire Balkan Peninsula. Sofia sits at the base of Vitosha Mountain.

The National Palace of Culture

The National Palace of Culture (NPC) – Congress Center Sofia is one of the largest multi-purpose venues in Southeastern Europe and it is a symbol of Bulgarian architecture and culture. It is situated in the heart of Sofia and is surrounded by a leisure park with fountains. NPC is within walking distance of all central places of Sofia.

Did you know that the design of the NPC was to imitate Bulgarian embroidery? Everyone has their path. We hurry and we spend our whole lives building our homes and family. The paths of our lives are like Bulgarian embroidery; they wind like beautiful Bulgarian horo dance and form infinity [1]. Everyone carries in their heart the tree of life! That tree was embroidered by our great-grandmothers, grandmothers and mothers. In its crown stands the centre of the universe – LOVE. In the embroideries are encoded blessings for health, happiness, longevity, love, abundance, children, prosperity and spiritual cultivation!

The freedom to breathe

The symbol of the NPC facade is a sun with rays of wheat stalks, borrowed from the ceilings of the Tryavna masters. The sun is a symbol and brings light that leads to general life progress, progress in science, new beginnings, the birth of new ideas and friendships, innovation and freedom!

Symbolically, the 'grain of wheat' represents a rhinologist who exhibits consciousness and humanity in all forms of life. When we sow a seed (introducing a new member into rhinology), we place it in previously plowed and cultivated ground. Life is possible because of the earth, which contains everything living and non-living. Earth cannot exist without the sun, water, fire and air. The human earth is the mind and consciousness that we build with our teaching but, physically speaking, in the human body, the earth is its pillar. The nose and the sinuses have the task of processing the inhaled air, namely – warming it, filtering it, moistening it, enriching it with oxygen, so that it can be brought to the next level of life. For a seed (rhinologist) to grow, to become a stalk (master rhinologist), it is necessary to water it sufficiently, to provide it with the necessary moisture, heat and light. If, however, this seed finds it difficult to

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accept this new teaching, then we must be tolerant. Tolerance is a good bonding material in any life situation. It is absurd for the strong to demand tolerance from the weak. The survival of the individual and the entire human race in general depends on being tolerant – of everyone in their human environment. Once the stalks (ERS juniors) have appeared, we must fertilise them, i.e. give them new directions for learning, labour and work, which is what all rhinologists do! This is exactly what the ERS2023 congress will show in Sofia.

Conclusion

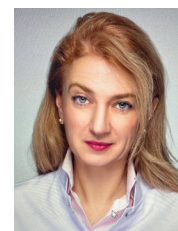
We, all Bulgarian otorhinolaryngologists together with the members of the board of ERS and the ERS Scientific Programme Committee, invite you from 18-22 June 2023 to the city of Sofia, Bulgaria, to enrich our rhinological knowledge, to improve our practical skills, to familiarise ourselves with

the latest developments in rhinology, to build and strengthen new friendships, as well as dance at will with a glass of Bulgarian wine and be free and happy! As Winston Churchill said: “All the greatest things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom; justice; honour; duty; mercy; hope.” Welcome to Bulgaria!

Reference

1. Todorova E. Bulgarski narodni shevitsi. 2016; G. Markov; Album II.

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www.bulgarianrhinologicsociety.org/en/