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IN MEMORIAM: MOMIR POLENAKOVIC

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The Leibniz Society of Sciences from Berlin e. V. mourns the loss of its member, the nephrologist Prof. Dr. Momir Polenakovic

On 06.03.2021, professor of internal medicine and nephrology, Momir Polenakovic, member of the Leibniz Society, died at the age of 81.

A few days after the clinical manifestation of COVID-19 infection, our member, Professor Dr. med. Momir Polenakovic, died at the age of 81 in his hometown of Skopje, North Macedonia.

Born on 26 April 1939 in Skopje and raised in a family characterized by science and humanism, he completed his medical studies in 1963 at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje as the best student of his cohort.

His training in internal medicine/nephrology took him to Chicago, London, Stockholm and Munich, and many other locations. After earning a doctorate in science in 1977, he was appointed to a professorship for internal medicine at the Medical Faculty in Skopje in 1988, where he was the director of the nephrology department until 1997. From 1991 to 1992, he was awarded a Fulbright professorship in Chicago.

In 1997, the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MANU) elected Momir Polenakovic as a member. From 2004 to 2007 he was the Vice President of the Academy. He was elected as a member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1994 and the Croatian Academy of Medical Sciences in 2002. In 2006 Momir Polenakovic also became a member of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences (San Francisco, USA) and the European Academy of Sciences (Salzburg, Austria). In 2007 he was elected as a member of the Leibniz Society, where he had been involved in the area of natural and technical sciences.

Prof. Polenakovic has completed over 400 publications in international specialist journals, 5 specialist books, and was active in publishing for 9 international specialist journals, all of which testify to his great scientific impact and charisma. He was a visiting professor at numerous international universities. Six international and national professional societies elected him as a candidate to their presidency, and 4 of them elected him as their president.

His home country and the international scientific community recognize the work of Momir Polenakovic with many honors. These include the highest national award, the order of the "11. October" and the United States' National Kidney Foundation Medal of Merit.

Because of his humanistic philosophy on life, Momir Polenakovic was a patriot of his homeland without ever being a nationalist. North Macedonia is grateful to him for the nation's early participation in therapeutic breakthroughs in

the treatment of kidney diseases. The first kidney biopsy, the first kidney transplant, and the establishment of dialysis centers in Macedonia, are all associated with his name, without exception. His initiative to found the Balkan Cities Association of Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation and Artificial Organs (BANTAO) in 1995 will certainly remain as an unforgettable event in the medical history of the Balkans. The purpose of this Association was to enable the doctors of the Balkan countries to work together through neutral Macedonia during the bloody wars in the Balkans.

Momir Polenakovic leaves behind a severely disabled wife, for whose care he has devoted himself, as well as two sons with their families.

For the Leibniz Society, he was one of the most important designers for the cooperation with the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. His last major project was the preparation of another joint symposium planned for 2022 with the Leibniz Society on the subject of medical organ replacement.

His home country, the international scientific community, and the Leibniz Society say goodbye to a great person. With Momir Polenakovic we are losing an honorable member of the Leibniz Society, whom we will keep in dignified memory. We express our deep condolences to the bereaved.