



The Central European Congress of Rheumatology (CECR) is a biannual meeting of rheumatologists from member countries and distinguished international speakers. The idea of CECR was created in 1996 in Piešťany (Slovakia) as an initiative of the presidents of 6 Central European societies for rheumatology: Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Croatia, the seventh member, joined later [1]. In 2024 the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of this event was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 5–7 December. All scientific sessions and presentations of poster abstracts took place at Cankarjev dom, the Cultural and Congress Centre of Ljubljana. The Congress Scientific Committee included representatives of all member countries, as follows: Želmíra Macejová (SVK), Žiga Rotar (SVN), Valerie Nell-Duxneuner & Christina Duftner (AUT), Srđan Novak (HRV), Włodzimierz Samborski (POL), Ladislav Šenolt (CZE), Zoltán Szekanecz (HUN), and Peter Balint (HUN).

The Organising Committee was chaired by Assist. Prof. Žiga Rotar.

The congress was organised by the Rheumatology Section of the Slovenian Medical Association. Several pharmaceutical companies were involved and sponsored this congress. The scientific journal *Reumatologia* was also a sponsor of CECR, and it was possible to present the journal's potential in the congress materials.

On the first day, honorary awards for lifetime achievement were presented to: Acad. Prof. Blaž Rozman (SVN), Prof. Matija Tomšič (SVN), and Prof. Eugeniusz J. Kucharz (POL).



Prof. Zoltan Szekanecz (HUN)



Assist. Prof. Žiga Rotar (SVN)

Two keynote lectures were presented, the first by the president of EULAR, Daniel Aletaha: “Building bridges in rheumatology: a view from the EULAR president”, and another by the president of the Hungarian Society of Rheumatology, Prof. Zoltán Szekanecz: “Fifty shades of oncorheumatology”.



Prof. Daniel Aletaha (AUT)





*The main lecture hall Cankarjev dom Congress Centre in Ljubljana*



*Gala at the Grand Hotel Union*



*Students of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, members of the Rheumatology Student Research Group at the National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Rehabilitation in Warsaw (Poland): Julia Dusiel and Paweł Gódlowski.*

## Congress in numbers

In total, 328 registered participants from 17 countries attended to the Cankarjev dom Congress Centre in Ljubljana.

In 10 sessions 42 oral lectures were presented. The organisers prepared 7 national sessions (each country proposed a topic, selected speakers for the session, and chose from submitted abstracts that suited their topic for one or two short oral presentations).

For the first time were three new sessions: young rheumatologist session with one oral presentation from each country, organised by Ladislav Šenolt, paediatric transition (main track), and hot topics in paediatrics (breakout track, dedicated to paediatricians).

In the poster tour 51 posters were presented.

As a special event during the congress on 6 December 2024 in a historical place, the Grand Hotel Union Eurostars, a gala congress dinner took place. This historical hotel was built in 1905 and is an example of the Vienna secession style, part of the Art Nouveau movement. In this place various personalities from the world of politics, film, music, and royalty have been hosted over the years including Queen Elizabeth II, Bill Clinton, and the Dalai Lama. It was a special evening, giving an opportunity to spend some time in a special place, exchange experiences, and make friends with rheumatologists from different countries, cities, and centres.

Among the congress participants were medical students from the scientific group of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, operating at the National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology, and Rehabilitation in Warsaw, Poland.

Closing the 14<sup>th</sup> Central European Congress of Rheumatology, an e-abstract book was published after its completion [2].

*I would especially like to thank and congratulate the chairman of the organising committee, Prof. Žiga Rotar, and the project manager, Gregor Rogač, for their efforts and excellent organisation.*

Now, having experienced it for myself, and making such fond memories of valuable scientific sessions and interesting conversations, I sincerely encourage you to attend the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress in Budapest in 2026.

## References

1. Szekanecz Z, Anic B, Héjj G, et al. Opportunities and challenges in rheumatology research in Central Europe. *Arthritis Res Ther* 2017; 19: 196, DOI: 10.1186/s13075-017-1368-z.
2. 14<sup>th</sup> Central European Congress of Rheumatology. 5–7 December 2024, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Abstracts. *Rheumatol Forum* 2024; 10, e-Suppl. A, 3–76. Available at: [https://www.cecr2024.eu/images/RF\\_2024\\_Supplement.pdf](https://www.cecr2024.eu/images/RF_2024_Supplement.pdf).