

Laudation for Professor Dr. Josef Smolen

Professor Josef Smolen is an outstanding and highly acknowledged personality of immunology and rheumatology, one of the leading experts of clinicians and researchers on this field of medicine. He is professor of Internal Medicine and chairman of Division of Rheumatology and Department of Medicine 3 at the Medical University of Vienna, he is also head of the Center of Rheumatic Diseases at Hietzing Hospital.

Prof. Smolen received his MD from the Medical Faculty of University of Vienna in 1975. He completed his research fellowship at the Arthritis and Rheumatism Branch at the National Institutes of Health in 1981. His main research activities include clinical trials and laboratory-based research in the fields of inflammatory diseases, autoimmunity and proinflammatory cytokines. His group's work is widely recognized for revealing novel pathogenic insights pivotally involved in the evolution of new treatment for rheumatoid arthritis (RA), such as biologic agents. He is also known for his new look at outcomes in RA and the creation of the „Treat to Target” strategy. He has published over 400 papers in rheumatology and immunology, he has been one of the mostly cited author on this area. He is the co-editor of 7 textbooks, editorial board member or editor of the leading international journals.

Prof. Smolen has served as president of the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) from 2003–2005, as president of the Austrian Society of Rheumatology from 2005–2007 and as president of the Austrian Society of Immunology 2007–2009. Since 2003 he is a member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and since 2007 of the German Academy of Sciences. He became fellow of the Royal Society of Physicians in 2008, Honorary Doctor of the University of Lund in 2010, and University of Leiden in 2014. He became the honorary member of the Hungarian, Czech, Italian, Slovak, Slovenian and Polish societies for rheumatology. As the president and later as the International Liaison officer of the EULAR he actively reached out to the European Union and WHO for the recognition of rheumatic diseases.

Prof. Smolen has had important scientific collaborations with the Hungarian rheumatology community for many years, resulting in peer reviewed publications and international recommendations. He played a key role in the organization of the European conference on the “Burden of musculoskeletal diseases” held in Budapest in 2011 on the occasion of the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union Council.

Prof. Dr. Gyula Poór