

International exchange for radiologists from Europe and beyond

INTERVIEW

After a successful start in 2015, the new English program “RöKo International” now runs for the third time at the German Radiology Congress 2017. International speakers from all over Europe, from Asia and the USA present a diverse program of talks covering a wide range of topics from different fields of radiology. Right from the beginning, the Bayer AG has been involved in this program as a main sponsor, thus playing a major part in organizing it. In the following interview, Robert Hite, Vice President, Global Strategic Marketing CT at the Bayer AG, speaks about the role of the German Radiology Congress and its international orientation, also highlighting the benefits the cooperation generates for the congress participants and the Bayer AG.

Mr Hite, why does “RöKo International” exist?

Together with the European Congress of Radiology (ECR), the German Radiology Congress is the second largest radiology congress in Europe. With its thematic focus, it complements the ECR program extremely well and it is another networking opportunity, where radiologists from all over Europe and beyond can exchange information.

Could you tell us how “RöKo International” began? And what was the role of the Bayer AG?

The idea for “RöKo International” was developed several years ago, together with Professor Michael Forsting from Essen, then President of the German Radiology Association. Professor Forsting’s goal was to open up the German Radiology Congress and take it beyond the borders of Germany as another opportunity for international exchange offered to non-German-speaking radiologists in addition to the ECR. As a globally operating company with distribution networks in many countries, we at Bayer immediately liked the concept of international exchange! Together with our financial support, we were also able to use our contacts in other countries to introduce the Radiology Congress to a wide international audience and motivate radiologists from all over the world to take part.

Why do you act as a sponsor for “RöKo International”?

Bayer is one of the leading globally operating companies in the field of radiology. Therefore, we feel committed to radiology and to scientific exchange in radiology. In addition to the continuous launch of new products that include the new MRI contrast agent introduced by the Schering AG or the first CT injection system developed by the Medrad GmbH, our research in medical sciences has also been a major influence in identifying the underlying mechanisms of nephropathy induced by contrast media (CIN), of nephrogenic systemic fibrosis (NSF) and now also of the accumulation of gadolinium in the brain. In this context, the program “RöKo International” provides

another fantastic forum for international scientific exchange. For this reason, we are very happy to support it.

How do the congress participants benefit from your sponsorship? And what are the benefits for the Bayer AG?

For the congress participants, "RöKo International" provides an extremely high-profile scientific program with the opportunity for international exchange. It is only possible to offer such a program if the travel costs can be funded for internationally renowned speakers, for example from East Asia or the USA. In order to achieve this, Bayer is happy to support the German Radiology Association. At the same time, "RöKo International" provides Bayer with a platform where it can present itself as a partner for the radiologists, which is how we see ourselves because of our long and successful history in the field of radiology. By sponsoring "RöKo International", we underline this partnership and hope to be perceived as **the** company with a clear commitment to radiology – a company that will continue to make relevant investments for the benefit of radiology.

Program committee RöKo International

Prof. Birgit Ertl-Wagner, M.D.
Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

Prof. Michael Forsting, M.D.
University Hospital Essen

Prof. Fabian Bamberg, M.D.
University Hospital Tübingen

Dr. Peter Bannas, M.D.
University Hospital Hamburg-Eppendorf

Prof. Stefan Diederich, M.D.
Marien Hospital Düsseldorf

Prof. Christiane Kuhl, M.D.
University Hospital Aachen, RWTH

Prof. Joachim Lotz, M.D.
University Hospital Göttingen

Prof. Frank Wacker, M.D.
Medical School Hanover

Prof. Stefan Wirth, M.D.
Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

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International cooperation:

“RöKo International” is a visible expression of the international relations nurtured by the German Radiology Association. All international training activities are subsumed under this label. The main focus is on the program in English at the German Radiology Congress, which was launched very successfully in 2015 and has grown steadily since 2015. Senior experts from Europe, the USA and Asia discuss fundamental topics of radiology. The general level of technical jargon and specialization is kept at a level that is generally understandable, for the joint benefit of all teams of specialists, from doctors in training to head physicians.

The German Radiology Association has international cooperation agreements with Korea, Japan, Rumania and Turkey. In Memoranda of Understanding, the associations in the individual countries commit to scientific cooperation and exchange. A ‘Speaker Exchange Clause’ ensures that two speakers from a partner country are invited each year to participate in the respective congresses at a national level. Regular leadership meetings provide a forum to discuss the current state of radiology in the partner countries and to plan current joint projects such as Fellowship Programs and joint congresses (e.g. JGRA 2016 or the annual MR Symposium in Rumania). Further activities of the individual associations – for example “Röntgen’s Birthplace” – are introduced. For this year, a cooperation agreement with China is planned.