

NEWS ITEMS

SERHIY KOMISARENKO

On the 80th birthday

On July 9, 2023, Serhiy Vasylovych Komisarenko, Editor-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Biochemical Journal (UBJ), a prominent scientist - biochemist and immunologist, a talented organizer, a well-known political and public figure, academician-secretary of the Department of Biochemistry, Physiology and Molecular Biology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, director of the Palladin Institute of Biochemistry of the NAS of Ukraine, turned 80 years old.



Serhiy Komisarenko is a Full Member (Academician) of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (immunology, 1991), Full Member (Academician) of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine (immunology, 1993), Doctor of Biological Sciences (molecular biology, biochemistry), Professor (biochemistry), laureate of the State Prize of Ukraine (1979) and NAS of Ukraine awards: O. V. Palladin Prize (2003) and I.I. Mechnikov Prize (2011).

The name Academician Komisarenko is renowned in Ukraine and beyond. He is descended from the glorious Komisarenko family, a family of scientists who significantly contributed to the development of modern biology and medicine. Serhiy Komisarenko is a dignified successor of the scientific traditions started by his father - an outstanding pathophysiologist and endocrinologist, academician Vasyl Pavlovych Komisarenko, founder of the Institute of Endocrinology and Metabolism of the NAMS of Ukraine in Kyiv, which now bears his name.

Serhiy Komisarenko is a scientist with wide-ranging interests; his research addresses various branches of science: biochemistry, immunochemistry, molecular immunology, medical and bioorganic

chemistry, pharmacology, to name but a few.

Serhiy Komisarenko's name is primarily associated with the establishing and developing of molecular immunology in our country. He pioneered this important branch of modern biology in Ukraine, which emerged at the junction of biochemistry, molecular biology, immunology and medicine. His main fundamental scientific achievements are related to immunochemical analysis of the structure of antigenic peptides and proteins. Serhiy Komisarenko, together with his disciples, was the first in the former USSR to start in-

vestigating the immunochemical structure of these compounds, using the methods of immune-enzymology and flow cytofluorimetry. He introduced the hybridoma technology for producing monoclonal antibodies. Thus, the most remarkable accomplishment in Serhiy Komisarenko academic career is the founding in Ukraine a new trend of research - molecular immunology - and a scientific school on molecular immunology, whose representatives later make their own important discoveries.

When the Chornobyl disaster happened, as a true scientist and citizen, he could not be a bystander. The issues of people's health protection and predicting the consequences of the accident for the population could not keep him uninvolved. Serhiy Komisarenko instigated and headed a unique study of the immunity of people who worked after the accident at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant. Using the most up-to-date methods, as early as the end of 1986, he made an important discovery that low doses of radiation substantially suppress natural immunity. It was Serhiy Komisarenko who coined the term "Chornobyl AIDS".

The results of the research activities of Serhiy Komisarenko have been of great scientific and practical significance. He led studies on the biological

effect of organophosphorus bisphosphonate complexes, discovering that methylene bisphosphonic acid has antitumor and immunomodulatory activity. On the basis of bisphosphonates and vitamin D derivatives, a new drug “Mebivid” (primarily for the treatment of osteoporosis) was developed. At the beginning of his scientific activity, he received the State Prize of the UkrSSR for the immunochemical study of milk proteins.

But Serhiy Komisarenko’s scientific interests are not limited to this. As a member of the inter-departmental commission in the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, he pays much attention to the strategy for bio-threat reduction in our country. He organizes international conferences and seminars on biosafety and biosecurity problems. Since 2005 he has led the Ukrainian delegation at regular meetings of experts of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. Nowadays, Serhiy Komisarenko is Ukraine’s leading national expert on biosafety issues in Ukraine.

It is hard to imagine the life of Serhiy Komisarenko without his principled position as a citizen and active government works aimed at establishing and developing an independent Ukraine.

In 1990, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine elected Serhiy Komisarenko as a Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR. He worked in this position and as Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine on humanitarian issues until April 1992. Serhiy Komisarenko played a proactive role in elaborating the first Ukrainian laws on humanitarian issues, in particular, on education, national minorities, freedom of conscience, press and mass media, pensions; initiated the adoption of the Law of Ukraine On Combating the Spread of Diseases Caused by Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), organized State Committee on AIDS Control and headed the Government Commission for combating this dangerous disease. He was chairman of several government committees and commissions: on the commemoration of the Babyn Yar tragedy (1990-1991), on holding the Congress of the Ukrainians (1991-1992), on humanitarian aid (1992), government anti-epidemic commission, etc.

In May 1992, Serhiy Komisarenko was appointed the first Ambassador of Ukraine to Great Britain and, since 1995 - to Ireland (part-time). Ambassador Serhiy Komisarenko successfully lobbied to support Ukraine’s accession to the Council of Eu-

rope and the ratification of the Agreement on Cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union by the British Parliament, etc.

While serving as ambassador, he greatly contributed to the development of bilateral Ukrainian-British relations; initiated Ukraine’s accession to the Directorate of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (1993), the International Maritime Organization (1995) and other international organizations hosted in the UK; organized the transfer of the British Antarctic station Faraday (now Akademik Vernadsky) to Ukraine free of charge (1995); founded in London a charity fund for the Chernobyl victims (1993) and the British-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce (1997). Owing to his work as ambassador, Ukraine received four houses in Britain (three in London and one in Edinburgh), thereby saving our country several million pounds sterling.

After the end of his service as a diplomat in April 1998, Academician Serhiy Komisarenko returned to his academic career and was again elected Director of the Palladin Institute of Biochemistry of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. From April 2004 to the present, he has been a member of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and Academician-Secretary of the Department of Biochemistry, Physiology, and Molecular Biology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

Serhiy Komisarenko is now still actively engaged in public and state activities. He was elected: first deputy of the President of Ukrainian Peace Council (1999), President of Ukrainian Biochemical Society (1999), President of Ukrainian Institute for Peace and Democracy (2000), President of the NGO “Special Olympics Ukraine” (2002), Chairman of the International Foundation “National memory of Ukraine” (2007), honorary member and board member of “British-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce”, member of the Presidium of National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine (2010).

He is the author of more than 600 scientific papers, over 80 national and international patents and inventions on biochemistry and molecular immunology, and numerous articles on Ukrainian politics and culture. His ponderings on these issues are those of a committed person with an active life position.

High professional achievements of Serhiy Komisarenko, his public and political activities were marked by the state awards: Order of Prince

Yaroslav the Wise 5th class (2005), Order of Merit 3^d (1996) and 2nd (1998) classes, Chinese Friendship Award (2012), Diploma of Parliament of Ukraine (2003), honorary title Honored Man of Science and Technology of Ukraine (2008). He is an honorary doctor of Kingston University and University of North London (1997), an honorary professor of Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University (2010) and Mechnikov Institute of Microbiology and Immunology (2011), and an honorary member of the Polish Biochemical Society (2011). He has held the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine since 1992.

At his home Institute, Serhiy Komisarenko has been working since 1966. Everybody, who has talked to him or listened to his speeches, has felt the sheer strength and appeal of his personality - a highly educated and exceptionally gifted person who has deep, encyclopedic knowledge not only in biology and medicine but also in social sciences, politics, literature, art - painting, music, theater; he is fluent in several foreign languages. His 80th birthday Serhiy Komisarenko is celebrating at the blossom of his creative inspiration, full of new ideas, plans and projects.

*Colleagues and friends of the Palladin Institute
of Biochemistry of the National Academy
of Sciences of Ukraine*