

EULOGY TO PROFESSOR LYGIA THERESE BUDNIK



With great sadness, we have to announce the death of Professor Lygia Therese Budnik, of Lygia, as we always affectionately called her, on November 20 after a long and severe illness.

Lygia was one of the founding members, essential initiator and mentor of our non-profit European Society for Environmental and Occupational Medicine (EOM). With her profound scientific knowledge, her wealth of ideas and her creativity, she has shaped the EOM in the most positive sense for many years, aiming at improving the independent, interdisciplinary prevention-oriented international collaboration between physicians and researchers for the detection and prevention of current and newly emerging occupational and environmental health hazards. Professor Budnik was also very engaged as a fellow of the Collegium Ramazzini from 2014 where she contributed significantly to pertinent initiatives.

Lygia was an accomplished pathobiochemist and toxicologist. She obtained her PhD at the Department of Physiological Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Hamburg, Germany, in 1990. In 2004 she became Associate Professor and in 2013 Professor at the University of Hamburg. She was head of the Translational Toxicology and Immunology Unit at the Institute for Occupational and Maritime Medicine at the University Medical Center, Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) from 2006 till 2019.

Lygia actively led the Global Plan of Action of the UN Health Council for the transport sector for several years, within the framework of the WHO Collaborating Centers for Occupational Health, hereby focusing on environmental and occupational health-interactions and preventative measures.

Lygia was also the initiator, “engine” and chairperson of the EU-COST Action DiMoPEX (Diagnosis Monitoring and Prevention of Exposure-Related Non-Communicable Diseases). In spite of her diminishing health, she very successfully managed DiMoPEX till her death. Under her leadership, the Action build a community of great scientific and policy relevance around this topic, enabling quality training, knowledge exchange and the development of a joint research agenda. The collaboration resulted in a series of publications as shown on the website <http://dimopex.eu/dissemination>).

One of the last major projects led by Lygia addressed the release behavior of gases from container-fumigated consumer goods as a basis for establishing risk assessment. In collaboration with the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research, the objective was to determine the health risk to the consumer from fumigation of food and everyday objects, such as clothing and toys. In this context, she also developed methodological approaches for the detection of a number of chemical agents relevant for the biomonitoring of aircraft personnel subjected to fume events. Her insights were of great

importance for the article "Investigating health and exposure circumstances of persons after aircraft fume events: a narrative review with medical protocol", submitted for publication.

Lygia was a very strong upright personality who knew how to stimulate and advance the activities of coworkers, colleagues and cooperating partners. Many publications in high ranking journals testify to her tremendous scientific oeuvre. The preservation of scientific integrity and the fight against pseudoscientific representations by corporate bodies, attempting to undermine occupational and environmental health policies, played an especial role in her whole career.

We have lost a great scientist, a strong fighter for scientific integrity, an inestimably devoted colleague and best friend. We must pay tribute to Lygia's great work and remind ourselves of her important contributions to our field. Our obligation is to further her passionate desire for a better future.

For responses of friends and colleagues to the announcement of Lygia's death see [Members/](#) [Members](#) area of this website.