

STI Global Update
Newsletter of the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections

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2020 was the first year in IUSTI history when we were unable to meet each other face to face. It was also the first year in IUSTI history when our annual IUSTI-Europe Congress, which had been planned to take place in Bucharest, went online. Thanks to the new technologies, it was all very successful. And, for the first time in our history all presentations were pre-recorded in order to prevent any translation surprises. As you all know, almost 10 years ago IUSTI-World approved establishing the regional IUSTI organization in Russia, the Guild of Specialists in STI “USTI RU”. Russia, of course, is a huge country, and before Covid led to the adoption of new technologies, we would annually organize around 20 conferences in various Russian cities, in order to acquaint representatives of the various fields involved in STI issues with all the news that emerges in our area. Chief among this would be the new IUSTI-Europe guidelines, and the new trends discussed at the annual IUSTI-Europe conferences and at the IUSTI-World. Unfortunately, the language barrier remains the major reason for the insufficient familiarity of the Russian specialists with the work of their international colleagues. Hence, our USTI-Russia conferences have always been a subject of lively interest within the country.

At the 2019 IUSTI-Europe in Tallinn, for the first time in IUSTI history, a special Russian-language session was organized. A large group of Russian participants at the Tallinn Congress were able to see for themselves the IUSTI at its best. This unusual event would later be repeatedly discussed at various Russian professional forums.

However, Russian specialists are still interested in the international activity of IUSTI. For this reason, we thought of using the unique opportunity presented by the existence of taped presentations from the Bucharest Congress in order to organize the final 2020 USTI-Russia conference together with IUSTI-Europe. We shared this idea with the IUSTI-Europe Regional Director Dr. Airi Poder, and we are very grateful to her for the understanding she expressed in response.

Since this was, in every sense, a first attempt of this sort, we discussed the possibility of using taped presentations from the Bucharest Congress with the Congress president, Prof. George Sorin Tiplica, as well as with the authors of those presentations we considered. We are grateful to them for their agreement. Due to the unusual nature of the event, we thought that it deserved to be done at the national, rather than a local/provincial level. As conference organizers, we provided simultaneous translation of each presentation. It should be noted that our event was scheduled for December, after the end of the official availability of presentations at the Bucharest Congress webpage.

The First Russian Online Congress on Sexually Transmitted Infections “IUSTI-2020” took place on December 4 and 5, 2020. It was organized with international participation and took place online, at www.iusti.ru. The Congress was organized with the support of the European branch of the International Union Against Sexually Transmitted Infections IUSTI-Europe and of its Russian organization, the Guild of specialists in STI “USTI RU”.

The main purpose of the event was promoting of the international and interdisciplinary interaction of STI specialists in order to develop a joint approach and to improve the standards of laboratory control and organization of effective prophylaxis, as well as raising the quality of STI treatment. The online congress facilitated exchange of experience between the Russian and international colleagues, acquisition of new knowledge about modern possibilities of STI diagnostics, treatment and prophylaxis.

We are extremely grateful to Dr. Ari Poder who agreed to be a co-chair of the Congress and made a wonderful presentation at its opening. We are particularly grateful to those colleagues who agreed to make available their presentations for the Russian audience: Claudia Heller-Vitouch, Gilbert Donders, Henri de Vries, Derek Freedman, George Sorin Tiplica and Alexandra-Irina-Butacu. In addition to them, 18 leading Russian experts took part in the Congress as co-chairmen and presenters.

The event participants were welcomed by the chief specialist gynecologists and dermatovenereologists from various federal districts and regions of Russia. The Congress united on the same online platform over 7 thousand medical specialists from Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, France, Belgium, Latvia, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Moldova and other European and ex-Soviet countries.