

Professor Dr. Dieter Seebach and Slovakia

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I started my academic carrier in 1960, and, therefore, it is not surprising that I followed Professor *Seebach's* scientific carrier almost from its beginning. I was fascinated by his excellent papers and was, therefore, eager to have copies of them. As internet and electronic databases did not exist, I used to write reprint request cards asking him for reprints of papers dealing with synthesis and reactivity studies of sulfur- and selenium-stabilized carbanions, those dealing with introduction of 'umpolung' principle to the organic synthesis, as well as introduction of TADDOLs into stereoselective catalysis. I was also asking for reprints of his papers on stereoselectivity studies using simple chiral natural compounds as are α -amino acids and β -hydroxy esters, which resulted in his formulation of self-regeneration of stereogenic centers (SRS), and many others. Professor *Seebach* was very kind and sent me all of them, what was not so usual in those years. I was especially grateful to him for sending me his excellent review '*Organic Synthesis – Where Now?*' together with a CD containing all papers which were cited. Reprints, I received, contained always a few nice sentences for me, and, in this way, we became friends on distance. My reprint cards were so frequent that he nicknamed me '*My best reprint consumer*'.

Sometime in the beginning of 1980s, I was bold enough and invited him to deliver a lecture at the Comenius University in Bratislava, at that time, socialist Czechoslovakia. Professor *Seebach* was brave enough and accepted my invitation, and delivered an excellent lecture on the chemistry of sulfur- and selenium-stabilized carbanions. I was very pleased that he came to Bratislava for the second time as the *Novartis* Lecturer in 1999, and especially that he accepted my invitation to be a plenary lecturer at 29th Meeting of Slovak and Czech Organic Chemists, which I organized in 2010 in Smolenice Castle. I have to stress that all lectures of Professor *Seebach* and his discussions with our young chemists at their posters were highly inspiring and challenging to young Slovak organic chemists and helped them in their carriers. Even greater help to the Slovak organic chemistry was provided by Professor *Seebach* by accepting three young colleagues from Slovakia, namely *Peter Mičúch*, *Radovan Šebesta*, and (partially) *Andrea Škvorcová* for postdoctoral stays. During my teaching years, I regularly incorporated Professor *Seebach's* discoveries in my lectures on mechanisms of organic reactions, and I am especially happy that, at the end of my scientific carrier, also our research interests have become closer, as Professor *Seebach* has published several key papers explaining the course of several organocatalyzed reactions.

Professor *Seebach* has received many prestigious awards, but the highest one is still missing. I know that he has been nominated to this award several times. I can only

speculate that his numerous great contributions to different branches of organic chemistry caused that selecting committee did not know which should be chosen as the main nomination.

Dear *Dieter*, it was always my great pleasure to meet you, to follow your lectures, and to discuss with you various aspects of chemistry or chemical education. On this special occasion, I would like to thank you sincerely for your friendship and for great help to the Slovak organic chemistry, and, for the coming years, I would like to wish you a good health and many interesting results in your research. I also hope that you will receive the only missing award – which could make me a rich person by selling your signatures to the signature collectors (how many your signatures I have!!!).

Many happy years to you!!!

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