

History of Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery

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ABSTRACT

Meetings among the ENT colleagues (ear, nose, throat doctors) in the Balkans (the peninsula at the southeast Europa) began in the end of 1920s. The Balkan Society of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery (ORL-HNS) was established in 1930 in Bucharest, Romania. Twelve Balkan ORL-HNS congresses have been held up to now. The first congress was organized in 1931 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Sixty-six years passed between the third and fourth Balkan Congresses. Since 2004, the congress has been held regularly every 2 years. The Balkan Association of ORL-HNS was officially registered in 2014 in Edirne, Türkiye. The member national societies/countries in alphabetical order are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Türkiye. There are over 8000 otolaryngologists in those countries who are also the natural members of the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS. This paper explains the history of the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS. With the friendly and peaceful activities of the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS, both scientific and social relationships are improved and strengthened among colleagues in the Balkan countries.

Keywords: Balkans, otorhinolaryngology, head and neck surgery, history, association

Early History of the Balkan Association Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery

Southeastern Europe constitutes a complex geographical area that has stood out, is imposing itself, and will always be noted in the life of our globe. In place of the turbulent conflictual past, of economies often put to the test and not infrequently uncertain prospects, which were its relative characteristics, we are witnessing lately the affirmation of human, professional values, and diplomatic common sense. Among them, the medical field was, is, and will be a real link in the conditions of international life. After any battle, typically won by whomever loses less, there will be casualties on both sides, and medical needs do not allow for selectivity in the Hippocratic Oath.

An example of the above is this society, which brings together all the multinational forms of cultural, religious, linguistic, economic, and even political life of the region. But in shaping it, the argument of communication, solved by the unified use of the French language in the early period and the English language today, allowed the creation of vast interhuman openings.

Despite the turbulent conditions of the time, the necessity of this scientific forum is found in the relations of collaboration and friendship forged since the 19th century in the established European centers of medical education. Among them, Vienna was important for us, being not only the closest, as well as medically complete, but also representing the cradle of otology. Among the many examples, I mention Dr. K. A. Bernard (1808-1844) as regards the Faculty of Medicine in Istanbul¹ and Leopold Kugel (1838-1916) as regards Romanian

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otorhinolaryngology. In the effervescence of the dissemination of specialties, he spent another 4 years in Istanbul and worked for 9 years in Bulgaria and Sofia.² Here, in 1891, he inaugurated the ophthalmology department of the Alexandrovska Hospital,³ which he handed over in 1895 to his former assistant Dr. Todor Girginov, on the occasion of leaving for a new visit to Vienna,⁴ to his friend Ádám Politzer (1835-1920), former student and collaborator in otology.

In parallel, the new generation of specialists trained at the beginning of the 20th century in renowned European schools, already as ear, nose, throat, and neck (ENT) specialists, naturally returned to their native lands. Among them, Dr. Stoyan Belinov (1872-1944), who, after his studies in Saint Petersburg,³ specialized in Vienna (2005)⁴ and continued to maintain friendly collaboration with many of the regional education centers, including Bucharest, which occupied a special place. Here, the annual conferences initiated international participation, thus becoming platforms for the future communion of nose, throat, and ears. Documents show that Prof. S. Belinov attended them in his capacity as head of the ENT Discipline and Head of Clinic at the Alexandrovska Hospital, starting with the Second Congress between October 27 and 28, 1923, followed by the fourth in 1925, and the sixth in 1927, which were also organized at the Colțea Hospital (Figure 1).

After the seventh in 1928 and the eighth in 1929, which were enjoyed by colleagues from Yugoslavia, Türkiye, and Bulgaria, he proposed the start of joint conferences "with the aim of forming an inter-Balkan otolaryngology society."⁵ At the ninth in 1930, it was decided that the first congress with the specifics of laryngology, the dominant subspecialty in the first period, would be awarded to the persistent initiator.⁶

The First Congress of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery (ORL-HNS) was organized in Sofia, Bulgaria between September 12 and 13, 1931. The president of the congress and the president of the society was Prof. Stoyan Belinov (Figure 2). In his inaugural speech, he emphasized the "scientific and political importance of the society as the first experience of Balkan friendship and union."⁴ The chosen topic, "Corrosive disease of the esophagus," followed the report written jointly with N. Mețianu. But the principal

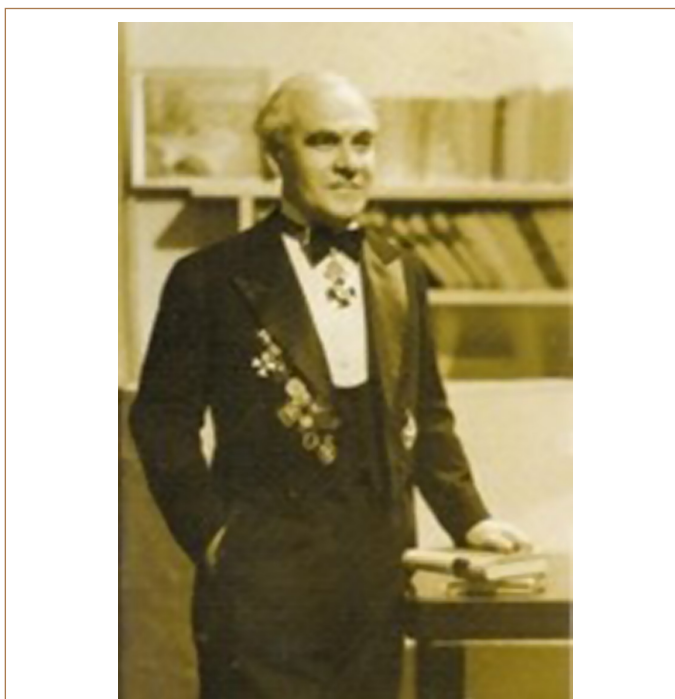


Figure 2. President of the society and the president of the First Congress of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, September 12-13, 1931, Sofia, Bulgaria: Prof. Dr. Stoyan Belinov.

work within the scientific program was "L'oesophatie corrosive aiguë d'après les données de la clinique"⁷ (transl. "Acute corrosive esophagitis according to clinical data"). He also projected the film entitled *Esophagoscopy without anesthesia*.⁴ Figures 3 and 4 show the participants of this first congress. Prof. Portman from Bordeaux and Marschik from Vienna were present, who praised the special quality of the event. At the end of the meeting, important pragmatic decisions were made, and the wish was expressed that the next meeting to be held in 2 years should be in Istanbul,⁶ but the location was later changed.

The Second Congress of the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS was held in Bucharest, Romania between October 26 and 27, 1933. The co-chairpersons were Prof. Dr. Christian Orăscu (1862-1938) (Figure 5) and Prof. Stoyan Belinov. The second president of the society (1931-1933) was Prof. Alexandru Costiniu-Senior (1867-1933) (Figure 6). He was going to preside but was diagnosed with a serious illness, "pains greater than his will made him end his life, before this date."⁸ For this reason, Chr. Orăscu took his place and presented the report on vocal nodules, especially in singers. In the framework of a particularly rich and varied program, after the meal of the first day, the most prominent Romanian otolaryngologists as well as Dr. Haydar Ibrahim (Istanbul), Dr. Baruhov (Sofia), and Dr. Belinov (Sofia) also gave talks. They ended the scientific debates with projections about the corrosive effects of caustic soda poisoning. From the second day, we mention Dr. Kovatcev with "Abscess of the brain and cerebellum according to the observations and clinical data of the ENT Clinic from Sofia."⁹ The event was organized together with the 11th Romanian ENT Congress, which also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Romanian ENT Society.



Figure 1. The Sixth Congress in 1927, with the celebration of Prof. Dr. Alexandru Costiniu-Senior's 60th birthday.



Figure 3. The participants of a scientific section at the First Inter-Balkan Otorhinolaryngology Congress.

The Third Congress of the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS was organized in Athens, Greece, between September 16 and 17, 1938. The president of the congress and the president of the society was Prof. Dr. Joannis Chryssikos (Figure 7). With an honorary committee that also included former presidents S. Belinov and N. Mețianu, it enjoyed a large participation of laryngologists from Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Türkiye beside the Greek colleagues. The Congress opened in a festive atmosphere, in the imposing hall of the University of Athens, under the honorary presidency of the Crown Prince Paul of Greece. The generous thematic focused on "The problem of deafness in the Balkan countries" with the presentation of co-reports by Prof. Belinov and Dr. Baruchov—Bulgaria, Guschitsch—Yugoslavia, Mețianu and Țețu—Romania, Sani Yaver—Türkiye and Chryssikos—Greece, alongside the "Examination respiratory function in the clinic" supported by Prof. Ekrem Behcet Tezel (1893-1965).⁵ In the end, the reunion was agreed to take place after 2 years in Türkiye in Istanbul or Ankara.¹⁰ The outbreak of the World War II with territorial and political disputes, doubled by major economic transformations, delayed the organization of meetings of this scope.



Figure 4. The memory picture from the First Congress in front of the cathedral in Sofia.



Figure 5. One of the co-chairpersons of the Second Congress of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, October 26-27, 1933, Bucharest, Romania: Prof. Dr. Christian Orăscu (1862-1938).

The current logo of the association was created by the great efforts of Prof. İbrahim Hızalan and accepted in 2005. However, the date in the logo was incorrectly designed with the year of establishment 1935.¹¹ We believe that the results of our research, submitted in order to reconstruct the beginning events of the society, represent not only the arguments of continuity but also the scientific motivation to change the date in the logo.



Figure 6. The second president of the society (1931-1933): Prof. Dr. Alexandru Costiniu-Senior (1867-1933).



Figure 7. The third president of the society and the president of the Third Congress of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, September 16-17, 1938, Athens, Greece: Prof. Joannis Chrysikos.

Founding of the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS

Bilateral meetings started to be held between some Balkan countries, Greece, Türkiye, Bulgaria, Albania, and Romania in the 1990s. The re-establishment of the Balkan Association was frequently discussed in these meetings. Prof Eugene Myers was a very good friend of both Prof Helidonis and Prof Önerci who were both trainees of Professor Eugene Myers. Profs Helidonis and Önerci with the support of Prof Myers worked on reactivating the Balkan Society. The World Congress of Otorhinolaryngologic Allergy, Endoscopy and Laser Surgery, June 1998, and 2001, Athens, Greece organized by Prof Helidonis (President of the Society was Prof Metin Önerci) and the International Meeting of ORL, 1-4 June 2000, Ankara, Türkiye, organized by Prof Önerci with participation of Prof Emmanuel Helidonis, Prof Metin Önerci, Prof Eugene Myers, Prof Todor Karchev and Prof Pavel Dimov, and other colleagues from Balkan countries, formed the basis to discuss the issues. In these meetings the decision to reactivate the Balkan ENT Society for supporting the collaboration and solidarity among the Balkan colleagues was made, and Prof Metin Önerci was assigned to write the bylaws of the Society. The bylaws prepared by Prof Önerci were accepted with a few minor changes in the 7th National Congress of Otorhinolaryngology, 18-20 October 2001 in Plovdiv Bulgaria. Therefore Balkan Society of Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery was established in Bulgaria and Prof. Todor Karchev became the first President.

The Fourth Balkan ORL-HNS Congress was decided to be held in Sunny Beach, Bulgaria between September 31 and October 3, 2004, under the presidency of Prof. Todor Karchev after the first 3 Balkan congresses (First Balkan Congress, September 12-13, 1931, Sofia, Bulgaria; Second, October 26-27, 1933, Bucharest, Romania; Third, September 16-17, 1938, Athens, Greece).

In 2012, the official registration of Balkan Society was discussed in Montenegro, at the board meeting. Prof. Metin Önerci accepted to register it officially and covered all the expenses. In the year 2014, it was registered as the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology,

Head and Neck Surgery in Türkiye; the center was Edirne, and Prof. Cem Uzun was elected as the general secretary and treasurer. He was recommended for this position again in 2022 and unanimously reelected in the Ohrid Congress.

Balkan Association of ORL-HNS in the New Era

As outlined in the previous section, the reestablishment and strengthening of the Balkan Association occurred with the colleagues meeting each other at several occasions such as meetings in Bulgaria, Greece, and Türkiye in the end of the 1990s and in the beginning of 2000. One of the most sustainable meetings for Balkan colleagues was fifteen years continuing medical education in otology and neuro-otology, annually organized by Prof. Pavel Dimov from Stara Zagora, Bulgaria.¹² In addition, there were joint meetings among the departments of ORL-HNS of three universities of Thrace (a small region in the southeast of the Balkans): Trakia University (Stara Zagora, Bulgaria), Democritus University of Thrace (Alexandropoulos, Greece), and Trakya University (Edirne, Türkiye). There were also joint meetings between the Greek and Turkish National Societies, and some other meetings in Bulgaria, Greece, and Türkiye with international participants, which allowed colleagues from Balkan countries to meet each other and support the idea of collaboration and solidarity among Balkan colleagues.

As the general secretary of the congress, Prof. Todor Karchev—the first president of the association in the new era—invited many colleagues from all over the Balkans to the Seventh Bulgarian National ORL-HNS Congress, October 18-21, 2001, Plovdiv, Bulgaria. A Balkan meeting was held during this congress, where the bylaws of the Balkan Society Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery (BSOHS: as it was called until the official registration of the association in 2014) were accepted. The Tables 1 and 2 show the administrative and board members of the association since 2002.

The Fourth Balkan Congress of ORL-HNS, which was organized by Prof. Todor Karchev in Sunny Beach, Burgas, was a successful

Table 1. Administrative Boards of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery in the New Era

Term	President	Vice-President	General Secretary
2002-2004	Todor Karchev	–	Pavel Dimov
2004-2006	İbrahim Hızalan	Ahmet R. Karasalihoğlu	Cem Uzun
2006-2008	Emmanuel Helidonis	Dimitrios Assimakopoulos	Vasileios Delis
2008-2010	Milan Stankovic	–	Rajko Jovic
2010-2012	Gheorghe Muhlfay	–	Viorel Zainea
2012-2014	Vladan Knezevic	–	Cem Uzun
2014-2016	Suela Sallavaci	–	(2012-2022)
2016-2018	Rumen Benchev	–	
2018-2022	Marina Davcheva Chakar	Jane Netkovski	
2022-2024	Metin Önerci	Mahmut Tayyar Kalcioğlu	Cem Uzun (2022-2030)
2024-2026	Dugagjin Spanca (P. Elect)	TBD	
2026-2028	TBD in Istanbul		
2028-2030	TBD in Prishtina		

Table 2. Board Members of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery in the New Era

Term	Board Members (<i>In Alphabetical Order</i>)
2002-2004	S. Cotelbea, P. Dimov, E. Helidonis, T. Karchev, M. Önerci, V. Popovski, P. Radovani, M. Stankovic, C. Uzun
2004-2006	J. Alagic-Smailbegovic, S. Cotelbea, R. Dergenc, I. Flipce, E. Helidonis, İ. Hizalan, A.R. Karasalihoğlu, T. Karchev, A. Kaytaz, P. Radovani, C. Uzun
2006-2008	J. Alagic-Smailbegovic, D. Assimakopoulos, R. Benchev, S. Cotelbea, V. Delis, E. Helidonis, İ. Hizalan, F. Jakimovska, T. Karchev, A. Limani, P. Radovani, M. Stankovic, C. Uzun
2008-2010	J. Alagic-Smailbegovic, S. Cotelbea, S. Dereköy, R. Jovic, M. Stankovic, V. Knezevic, K. Kunev, A. Limani, N. Nikolovski, P. Radovani, S. Spremo, G. Velegrakis
2010-2012	J. Alagic-Smailbegovic, R. Jovic, V. Knezevic, K. Kunev, A. Limani, G. Muhlfay, N. Nikolovski, P. Radovani, A. Sismanis, S. Spremo, C. Uzun, V. Zainea
2012-2014	J. Alagic-Smailbegovic, R. Benchev, V. Daniilidis, R. Jovic, V. Knezevic, A. Limani, G. Muhlfay, N. Nikolovski, P. Radovani, S. Spremo, C. Uzun
2014-2016	J. Alagic-Smailbegovic, R. Benchev, V. Daniilidis, R. Jovic, M.T. Kalcioğlu, V. Knezevic, A. Limani, G. Muhlfay, N. Nikolovski, S. Sallavaci, S. Spremo, C. Uzun
2016-2018	J. Alagic-Smailbegovic, R. Benchev, S. Triaridis, R. Jovic, M.T. Kalcioğlu, V. Knezevic, A. Limani, M. Milkov, G. Muhlfay, N. Nikolovski, S. Sallavaci, S. Spremo, C. Uzun
2018-2022	R. Benchev, F. Brkic, M. Davcheva-Chakar, R. Jovic, M.T. Kalcioğlu, V. Knezevic, D. Spanca, G. Muhlfay, J. Netkovski, N. Nikolovski, I. Setic, S. Sallavaci, S. Spremo, S. Triaridis, C. Uzun
2022-2024	M. Davcheva-Chakar, J. Fejza, F. Jakimovska, R. Jovic, M.T. Kalcioğlu, E. Zvrko, Z. Limani, M. Milkov, G. Muhlfay, M. Önerci, D. Spanca, S. Spremo, S. Triaridis, S. Umihanic, C. Uzun, Ö. Yiğit

**Figure 8.** The presidents and the general secretaries of the Balkan Association Between 2002 and 2006. From left to right: Profs. Hizalan, Karchev, Dimov, and Uzun.

beginning for the association (Figures 8 and 9). The fifth one, which was held in Edirne, was an exceptional event both from the scientific program and social point of view. The presidents of the Turkish Society of ORL-HNS at that time, Prof. Asim Kaytaz and then Prof. Nermin Başerer, fully supported this event to be an affordable one for all colleagues from the Balkans. In spite of limited congress and accommodation facilities, almost 400 participants from all 12 countries of the Balkans attended the Congress and enjoyed their time in Edirne (Figures 10-12). The following congresses are shown in Table 3. Pictures and some news related to those congresses as well as some other Balkan meetings can be found on the official Facebook page of the association.¹³ The organizers of these congresses did their best to serve an unforgettable scientific and social event to the colleagues not only in their countries but also from all Balkan and neighboring countries (Figure 13 and 14).

**Figure 9.** A picture from the General Assembly at the Fourth Congress in Sunny Beach, Burgas. From left to right: Drs. Pavel Dimov, Sefa Kaya, Frodita Jakimovska, Vesselin Pavlov, Rumen Benchev, Radmilo Roncevic, Anthony G. Papavassiliou, Cem Uzun, İbrahim Hizalan, Todor Karchev, Trifon Kiratzidis, Asim Aslan, and Tuncay Uluğ.



Figure 10. The group photo from the Fifth congress in Edirne. Front-middle: Profs. Hizalan and Helidonis. From left to right in the second line: Drs. Çelik, Yetişer, Özgirgin, Yağız, Aydın, Dergenc, Jovic, Tos, Magnan, Kaya, Sallavaci, Radovani, Sulcebe, Shakiri, and the General Secretary Uzun.

In order to distribute information among the Balkan colleagues, an official web page (<https://balkanent.org/>) and a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/balkan.orlhns>) have been in use since 2014.^{13,14} The collaboration among the Balkan colleagues also lasted during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, although a physical congress could not be organized during those difficult times. Online friendly meetings, panels, and introduction of Balkan ORL

and HNS clinics were presented to keep the relations and information exchange during the pandemic.¹³

The Balkan Association of ORL-HNS became the member of the International Corresponding and Affiliated Societies of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and the Confederation of European ORL-HNS since 2019. The first joint meetings with these 2 important organizations were held during the 12th Balkan Congress in Ohrid, North Macedonia.



Figure 11. The honorary president of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery - Prof. Eugene Myers, the president of the Fifth Balkan Congress—Prof. Ahmet R. Karasalihoğlu, and the president of the Balkan Association - Prof. İbrahim Hizalan, 2006, Edirne, Türkiye.



Figure 12. Photo from the gala dinner of the Fifth Congress. Colleagues are dancing with the Balkan songs performed by Muammer Ketencoglu and his group "Balkan Journey."

Table 3. Balkan Congresses of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery in the New Era

Number	Date	City/Country	President/Vice-President	Scientific Secretary
Fourth	September 30-Oct 3, 2004	Burgas/Bulgaria	Todor Karchev	Pavel Dimov
Fifth	September 6-9, 2006	Edirne/Türkiye	Ahmet Karasalihoğlu	Cem Uzun
Sixth	October 2-5, 2008	Thessaloniki/Greece	Anestis Psifidis	George Kontzoglou
Seventh	June 10-13, 2010	Nis/Serbia	Milan Stankovic/Misko Zivic, Dusan Milisavljevic	Rajko Jovic
Eighth	June 10-12, 2012	Tirgu Mures/Romania	Gheorghe Muhlfay/Stăn Cotelbea	–
Ninth	June 1-5, 2014	Budva/Montenegro	Vladan Knezevic	Milan Stankovic
Tenth	June 2-5, 2016	Tirana/Albania	Suela Sallavaci	–
Eleventh	May 31-Jun 3, 2018	Varna/Bulgaria	Rumen Benchev	Mario Milkov
Twelfth	June 1-5, 2022	Ohrid/North Macedonia	Frodita Jakimovska/Jane Netkovski	Cem Uzun
Thirteenth	June 6-8, 2024	İstanbul/Türkiye	Metin Önerci/Özgür Yiğit	Cem Uzun and Mahmut Tayyar Kalcioğlu
Fourteenth	TBD	Prishtina/Kosovo	TBD	

Some of the international experts in ORL-HNS, who spent great effort in the educational activities of the association, were elected as the honorary members of the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS (Table 4). Memorial lectures have been dedicated to the memory of Professors Todor Karchev, Mirko Tos, Adem Limani, and Jacob Sade.

Beside the Balkan congresses, several other meetings were organized especially for the colleagues from all over the Balkans. The Balkan Education Tour on ORL-HNS, which was organized by the Turkish Society of ORL-HNS and host countries' (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and North Macedonia) national societies, lasted for 8 days between May 10 and 17, 2013. The First Balkan ENT School was organized in Antalya between December 3 and 7, 2014, by the Turkish and Bulgarian Societies of ORL-HNS. Most of the participants were young Bulgarian ENT specialists. The Second Balkan ENT School was organized again in Antalya between January 17 and 21, 2016, by the Turkish Society of ORL-HNS. The school program included lectures and hands-on courses in otology, rhinology, and

head-neck, mostly given by well-known Turkish professors. There were more than 50 young colleagues from the Balkans and also from other eastern European countries, who received not only practical knowledge but also met each other and developed their network. Another interesting scientific and social event was the Istanbul Live Surgery Course on Otology-Neurotology-Cochlear Implantation organized with the Turkish Skull Base Society as a joint meeting between April 13 and 14, 2016, in İstanbul. Balkan Association of ORL-HNS helped the main hosts and joined the organization in all of those events, which were freely offered to our young colleagues in their early careers. We also communicated our appreciation to the host organizations for providing accommodation for those colleagues. We think that, besides those meetings, the board meetings of the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS, which were regularly done during Turkish National ORL-HNS congresses, at some other national congresses in the Balkans, and at the European ORL-HNS Congresses, have also been good opportunities to strengthen our collaboration among otolaryngologists in the Balkans (Figures 15 and 16).



Figure 13. The board and the honorary members received their certificates from the society and the congress president Prof. Suela Sallavaci. From left to right: Cem Uzun, Suela Sallavaci, Eugene Myers, Dan Fliss, Jasminka Alagic-Smailbegovic, M. Tayyar Kalcioğlu, Rumen Benchev, Vladan Knezevic, Vasilis Daniilidis, Rajko Jovic, Adem Limani, Metin Önerci, and Milan Stankovic.



Figure 14. Balkan Congress in Montenegro. From left to right: Ferhan Öz, Mrs Semra Önerci, Mrs Barbara Myers, Metin Önerci, Eugene Myers.

Table 4. Honorary Members of the Balkan Association of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery

Honorary Members	Achievements and Contributions
Eugene Myers (honorary president)	Involved in the reestablishment of the association and in its activities; he supported the education of colleagues from the Balkans
Mirko Tos	Involved in the activities of the association and supported the education of colleagues from the Balkans
Jaques Magnan	Involved in the activities of the association and supported the education of colleagues from the Balkans
Dan Fliss	Involved in the activities of the association and supported the education of colleagues from the Balkans
Jacob Sade	Involved in the activities of the association and supported the education of colleagues from the Balkans
Thomas Balkany	Involved in the meetings and supported the education of colleagues from the Balkans
Metin Önerci	Involved in the reestablishment and official registration of the association, and in its activities; he organized educational activities for colleagues from the Balkans
Emmanuel Helidonis	Involved in the reestablishment of the association and in its activities; he supported the education of colleagues from the Balkans
Pavel Dimov	Involved in the activities of the association; he organized meetings and educational activities for colleagues from the Balkans
İbrahim Hızalan	Involved in the activities of the association; he organized meetings and educational activities for colleagues from the Balkans
Milan Stankovic	Involved in the activities of the association; he organized meetings and educational activities for colleagues from the Balkans
Karl Hörmann	Involved in the activities of the association and supported the education of colleagues from the Balkans
Hesham Negm	Involved in the activities of the association and meetings in the Balkans and supported the association



Figure 15. Photo from the board meeting at the 38th Turkish National Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery Congress, October 26-30, 2016, Antalya. Left to right; sitting line: Adem Limani, Suela Sallavaci, Cem Uzun, Jasminka Alagic-Smailbegovic, and Mahmut Tayyar Kalcioğlu; standing: Rajko Jovic, Stefanos Triaridis, Slobodan Spremo, Nikola Nikolovski, Milan Stankovic, Gheorghe Muhlfay, İbrahim Hızalan, Pavel Dimov, Mario Milkov, Metin Önerci, and Vladan Knezevic.



Figure 16. Photo after the board meeting at the Prague European Congress, 2015. From left to right; lower line: Muhlfay, Vicheva, Saunders, Incesulu, Myers, Sallavaci, Fliss, Triaridis, Alagic-Smailbegovic, Uzun, Limani, Davcheva-Chakar, Knezevic, and Ivanovska; upper line: Katotomichelakis, Hizalan, Daniilidis, Konstantinidis, Kalcioğlu, Öz, Özgirgin, and Kaytaz.

We believe that the Balkan Association of ORL-HNS and its activities have improved communication among colleagues in our region, provided a strong network for them, improved their clinical skills, and become a good example for other medical specialties and regions in the world.

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