In previous years Prague has hosted a number of important ophthalmological events including the European Vitreo-Retinal Society (EVRS) annual meeting in September 2008 and the World Congress on Controversies in Ophthalmology in March 2010.

Now we are looking forward to the great honour of hosting the 16th ESCRS Winter Meeting from 3-5 February, 2012.

It is an excellent opportunity to share experiences, either through videos or short papers or by simply participating in the open forum, to search for new approaches and techniques, to express doubts and contribute ideas and to discuss thoughts with international experts. As Prague is a city in the heart of Europe it is also a great occasion for meeting ophthalmologists from Western and Eastern Europe.

The exciting schedule for the 16th ESCRS Winter Meeting includes basic and advanced didactic courses as well as surgical skills courses, free paper sessions and keynote lectures delivered by international specialists. The meeting will be attractive for the residents as well as for our experienced colleagues not just from Czech Republic but worldwide. Participants will have the advantage of discussing unresolved issues with leading world experts in the field of cataract and refractive surgery. The congress aims to deliver the best answers currently available and provide the clinician with reliable, up-to-date scientific solutions, based on the best existing evidence.

Over the years, Czech ophthalmology has undergone an enormous expansion in clinical trials and basic research as well as surgical skills courses, free paper sessions and keynote lectures delivered by international specialists. The meeting will be attractive for the residents as well as for our experienced colleagues not just from Czech Republic but worldwide. Participants will have the advantage of discussing unresolved issues with leading world experts in the field of cataract and refractive surgery. The congress aims to deliver the best answers currently available and provide the clinician with reliable, up-to-date scientific solutions, based on the best existing evidence.

Jan Evangelista Purkinje (1787-1869) is known to all ophthalmologists for Purkinje’s cells. He had wide-ranging interests and an exceptional capacity for innovative thinking. Purkinje was a Czech nationalist and had a major influence on Czech cultural life in the middle of the 19th century. He was a friend of the famous German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who wrote about Purkinje: “And should you fail to understand, let Purkyně give you a hand!”. Purkinje published a Czech translation of Friedrich Schiller’s poems, and translated works of William Shakespeare into Czech.

Jan Vanýsek (1910 - 1995)) was a professor of ophthalmology at the Medical Faculty of Masaryk University (formerly Medical UJEP in Brno). From 1955 to 1970, he was head of the Department of Ophthalmology Faculty of Medicine and between 1957-1960 he was dean of the Faculty. He was also a long-time chairman of the Czechoslovak Medical Society JE Purkyně in Prague. In 1969 he was elected rector of the university, but for political reasons he was not confirmed by the Ministry of Education of Czechoslovakia and had to retire from the university.

Prof Václav Vejdovský (1896 -1977) was for many years head of the Olomouc Clinic. He was one of the founding members of the Czechoslovak Ophthalmological Society and for many years its vice-chairman. From 1967-1970 he was the chairman of the society. He also represented Czechoslovakia in the committee of the European Ophthalmological Society.

There are many other great Czech ophthalmologists that I could mention but you can find out more about them when you visit us next February. We look forward very much to the 16th ESCRS Winter Meeting and hope it will help us to build on the successes of other winter meetings in recent years.

Pavel Studeny is a member of the ESCRS Board.