Radiology – no therapy without diagnosis
The latest medical advances at the 2015 ECR

From 4-8 March 20,000 radiologists will converge on the Austria Center Vienna for the European Congress of Radiology. With around 100 Austrian speakers and moderators ready to shed light on the latest medical advances, this year’s ECR once again demonstrates the leading role played by the nation’s radiologists on the international stage.

Radiology – from X-ray to multidetector CT
Today radiology is the central diagnostic discipline used in modern medicine, 120 years after Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen’s pioneering work laid its foundations. The scope of medical imaging has increased significantly over time, and, in addition to conventional X-rays, it now extends to electromagnetic rays, mechanical waves, sonography, magnetic resonance tomography, computed tomography and hybrid imaging techniques. State-of-the-art technology is used to improve image clarity, reduce radiation exposure for patients and make personalised diagnostics a reality. “Radiology is an essential part of medicine. Successful therapy is predicated on a correct diagnosis,” explained leading Viennese expert Professor Wolfgang Schima, President of the Austrian Roentgen Society and Head of the Department of Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology at the Göttlicher Heiland, Barmherzige Schwester and St. Josef hospitals in Vienna.

Radiology used to treat vascular conditions and cancer
Radiology also plays an important role in treatment, one that goes beyond pure diagnostics. Interventional radiology, which has come on leaps and bounds over the past five years, can also be used in the treatment of vascular occlusion where it either eliminates the need for bypass operations altogether or puts back surgery for years or even decades. An acute radiological treatment to unclog blocked arteries can significantly lessen the effects of certain types of stroke. Radiology has also proved highly effective in the treatment of tumours. Advances in magnetic resonance therapy mean that even small tumours such as prostate carcinomas are clearly visible.

“In the past, samples of prostate tissue were taken at random, but contemporary magnetic resonance therapy means that we can target specific areas with a high degree of accuracy and extract the tissue samples needed for biopsies directly from the tumour. This represents a medical milestone in the early recognition and treatment of carcinomas. When used in therapy control, radiology is also able to rapidly identify whether chemotherapy is having the desired effect. This approach allows us to protect patients from unnecessary side effects, and by working with the oncologists we are able to extend the treatment window and cut the costs associated with medicines that individual patients fail to respond to," Schima explained.

The ECR – driving innovation in the Austrian conference industry
The sheer range of areas covered by radiology is reflected in the conference programme for this year’s European Congress of Radiology (ECR), which has something for people at
all stages of the radiological career spectrum – from undergraduates to leading international specialists. “It means a lot for us to offer an innovative programme that always reflects the very latest advances in research. This approach has helped us to become one of the world’s biggest medical conferences,” noted Peter Baierl, Executive Director of the European Society of Radiology.

With more than 100 lecturers and moderators from Austria, this year’s ECR once again demonstrates the leading role played by the nation’s researchers, institutions and radiologists on the international stage. Vienna, Innsbruck and Graz are the leading research centres in Austria. The Medical University of Vienna at Vienna General Hospital recently acquired the first PET-MR system in Austria, forming part of its medical imaging research cluster. This new device supports simultaneous magnetic resonance tomography and positron emission tomography, a highly effective tool in tumour diagnostics and tumour therapy control. Only available in a handful of centres in Europe, this piece of equipment represents the absolute technological state of the art.

Austria has been acting as an interface between radiologists in eastern and western Europe for the radiological community since the 1990s. So it comes as no surprise that the European Society of Radiology has chosen Vienna and the Austria Center Vienna to host its annual congress. “The choice of venue ensures that our colleagues from eastern European countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia are part of the information exchange process,” Schima added. The Austrian capital is one of the most popular conference destinations worldwide.

Future focuses and knowledge transfer
The president of the Austrian Roentgen Society believes that interventional radiology and more targeted use of magnetic resonance therapy are two of the key topics for the future. Radiology and nuclear medicine will increasingly overlap due to the synergies between the two disciplines.

To open up the conference to as many people as possible and drive the pace of scientific progress, virtually all of the sessions at this year’s ECR were streamed online in real time via the ECR Live platform. In all, more than 1,500 ECR 2014 sessions were watched online by a total of 5,500 participants. “The ECR Live social media wall allows users at home to share information with delegates and speakers at the conference in real time. This means that the ECR is no longer a closed event in the conventional sense, but brings together a global network of radiologists both face-to-face and virtually,” Baierl concluded.

The high-performance unrestricted WiFi network at the Austria Center Vienna for up to 20,000 people really comes into its own at the ECR, as do the flexible spaces at the nation’s largest conference centre.

At this event the organiser and host are working together to accommodate the growing number of participants. Once again this year the ECR supplemented the spaces available at the Austria Centre Vienna by adding the 2,800-capacity meeting facilities at the neighbouring Vienna International Centre used by the UN organisations.

About the ECR
The ECR is the annual meeting of the European Society of Radiology, which represents
more than 62,000 radiologists from 156 countries worldwide. Attracting more than 20,000 participants each year, the ECR is one of the largest medical conferences on the planet. This year the European Society of Radiology celebrated its 10th anniversary.

About the Austria Center Vienna
The Austria Center Vienna is operated by Internationales Amtssitz- und Konferenzzentrum Wien, Aktiengesellschaft (IAKW-AG), which is also responsible for maintaining the Vienna International Centre (VIC). The Austria Center Vienna is Austria’s largest conference centre, with 24 halls, 180 offices and meeting rooms, and some 42,000 square metres of event space (including 22,000 square metres of exhibition space), and is one of the top players on the international conference circuit. IAKW-AG and the Austria Center Vienna are headed by Chief Executive Officer Susanne Baumann-Söllner. www.acv.at.

Contact
IAKW-AG – Austria Center Vienna            European Society of Radiology (ESR)
Claudia Reis                                   Julia Patuzzi, David Zizka
Press Officer                                  Press Office
Tel: +43 (0)1 26069-331                        Tel: +43 (0)1 5334064-545
E-mail: claudia.reis@acv.at                  press@myESR.org
www.acv.at                                      myESR.org