

Dear conference participants!

I am very pleased that the Baltic Conference of Hematology returned to Estonia in its eighth year, a country where the first Baltic Conference of Hematology was organised by Professor Hele Everaus in 1998 in Tartu.

As people involved in the field of hematology, you have chosen a responsible and dignified yet complicated and difficult specialty, a specialty characterised by dynamic development that requires you to regularly undergo in-service training and keep up-to-date. Today's conference represents one step along this path.

In Estonia, hematology is an independent specialty characterised by long traditions. The first specialised hematology department was established at Tallinn Central Hospital already back in 1984. The chair of hematology was opened in University of Tartu in 1993 and residency in the specialty of hematology in 1995. Professor Hele Everaus completed the first bone marrow transplant in Tartu in 1993. We've taken some sustainable steps that are contributing to improved quality of life of patients, and are lengthening the lives of those facing serious diseases.

The treatment of hematological diseases has made considerable progress over the last decade. Today, most children suffering from acute leukaemia are cured. Even the most aggravating prognosis is today no longer completely without hope.

As most hematological diseases are rare, international co-operation is essential in order to achieve better treatment results, as this allows for the coming together of knowledge and skills, considerably enhancing positive treatment outcomes.

The extension and development of regional co-operation is one of the missions of the Baltic Conference of Hematology.

The congress also offers a good opportunity to present the latest achievements in research and to create new contacts.

This congress is the 8th – the tradition has well and truly taken root and born fruit. This year, for the first time, a session has been organised for patients to demonstrate that strong connections and co-operation between patients and their doctors help to achieve better treatment results and improve the quality of our lives, giving further hope, even in cases of the most complicated and serious diseases. I hope you all have an enjoyable conference full of discoveries.