

Ľubomír Smrčok (1954–2016)

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I am sad to announce that Ľubomír Smrčok is no longer with us. He was born 10 August 1954 in Bratislava, Slovakia, and left us suddenly on 11 August 2016 in the same city. He leaves behind his wife, a son and a sister.

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Figure 1
Ľubomír Smrčok with the author of this obituary (in background) 15 years ago at the summit of one of the Low Tatra Mountains.

My memories of Ľubo go back to 1980, when he attended a local conference of the Czech and Slovak Crystallographic Association in Prague for the first time. At this meeting he was already expressing his opinions openly, though it was not the most diplomatic way at that time of communist rule. After finishing his PhD studies at the Institute of Inorganic Chemistry of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, he continued his scientific work there, eventually becoming Head of the Division of Theoretical Chemistry.

The scope of his work was broad, covering inorganic, metal–organic and organic chemistry, using mostly X-ray and neutron diffraction techniques on both single-crystal and polycrystalline materials, combined with theoretical calculations applying the density functional theory approach at various levels. His scientific work resulted in hundreds of contributions at different conferences (*e.g.* EPDIC, ECM and IUCr Congresses) and publications, often in IUCr journals.

Ľubo was an active member of the IUCr Commission on Powder Diffraction in the years 2008–2014. He took part in the preparation of different conferences organized by this Commission and he was Chair of the Organizing Committee for SSPD'03 (Structure Solution from Powder Diffraction Data) in Stará Lesná, in his beloved part of Slovakia – the Tatra Mountains.

In 2014 (together with Dr Dalma Gyepesová) he successfully persuaded the authorities to release a Slovak postal stamp to celebrate the International Year of Crystallography (IYCr 2014); the work on this project required two years of negotiations and discussions.

He will be sadly missed and we extend our heartfelt sympathy to his family.