With deep sadness we announce that Professor Valdis Kalkis of the University of Latvia passed away on 12th of July, 2014. Professor Kalkis will always be remembered as the founder of scientific ergonomics in Latvia. He was one of the first to obtain the title of certified European ergonomist (Eur.Erg.) in Latvia.

Professor Valdis Kalkis worked more than 40 years at the University of Latvia in Faculty of Chemistry. With his enthusiasm and wisdom he knew how to convince students to become actively involved in scientific research, educated many young scientists in the chemical sciences and gave practical skills and knowledge to professionals not only in chemical science, but also in occupational safety, occupational health and ergonomics.

Professor Valdis Kalkis studied at three universities; the University of Latvia, Faculty of Chemistry, Riga Technical University, Faculty of Chemistry and Saint Petersburg State University, Faculty of Radiochemistry. He focused passionately on scientific research and received the acknowledgement of habilitated doctor in chemistry (Dr.habil.chem.).

Professor Kalkis was the first Latvian among the pioneers who developed and participated in the research at the Salaspils Nuclear Reactor ([http://www.britishpathe.com/video/atomic-reactor-nears-completion-aka-atomic-reactor/query/RUSSIAN+ATOM](http://www.britishpathe.com/video/atomic-reactor-nears-completion-aka-atomic-reactor/query/RUSSIAN+ATOM)), in the late 1960's where he worked in close cooperation with the world's leading physicists and radiation chemists.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Professor Valdis Kalkis helped develop the field of occupational health and safety in Latvia and started the first courses in work safety and risk assessment methods. He also showed great interest in ergonomics, establishing 15 years ago a completely new higher professional study program in Latvia that was later transformed into the master study program “Work Environment and Expertise” focusing on health and safety in the work environment, the wellbeing of employees, ergonomics and organizational performance. Professor Kalkis has been the director of this master study program since 2001. He developed the following courses in Latvia; “Work Environment Expertise”, “Work Environment and Safety”, “Work environment risk factors” and “Basics of Ergonomics”. Professor Valdis Kalkis also made significant contributions to the development of legislation in the field of occupational health and safety. He introduced the scientific approach to ergonomics in Latvia and in 2006 he was the initiator and co-founder of the Latvian Ergonomics Society.

environment risk factors, the macro-ergonomics approach and the economic aspects of workplace interventions.

Professor Kalkis received patents for advanced inventions and represented Latvia in worldwide scientific congresses and conferences. His scientific and professional activities in the field of occupational health and safety, including ergonomics, has been highly appreciated at the University of Latvia, the Latvian Academy of Sciences, as well as in the wider world (International Ergonomics Association, FEES – Federation of European Ergonomics Societies, CREE – Centre for Registration of European Ergonomists). He received various honors and titles (including the title certified European Ergonomist) and was appreciated by local and international colleagues, experts and scientists. In 2013 Professor Valdis Kalkis was named as the greatest scientist of the year at the University of Latvia (http://www.lu.lv/eng/news/t/25302/).

For Professor Kalkis the meaning of a healthy work environment also meant ethical relationships and Christian values among workers and with other colleagues – scientists.

Main career facts:

Personal information:
VALDIS KALKIS, Dr.habil.chem., Professor

Education
1955-1957      Latvian State University, Faculty of Chemistry (cum laude)
1958-1961      Sankt-Petersburg State University, Faculty of Radiochemistry (cum laude)
1958-1961      Riga Technical University, Faculty of Chemistry (cum laude)

Practical studies in foreign countries:
Denmark, Denmark Technical University (Polymer chemistry), 1994
Sweden, Brunswick High School (OHS evaluation), 1997
Norway, Oslo (Workplaces Health Promotion), 2000
USA, Las Vegas, Miami, San Francisco (Human Factors and Ergonomics, 2008 – 2012)

Work experience
1968-1973      Institute of Wood chemistry, Latvian Academy of Sciences (senior researcher)
1961-1967      Latvian Nuclear Reactor, Institute of Physics, Latvian Academy of Sciences (chief engineer of Radiochemistry service)

Research directions
Work environment health and safety, ergonomics, risk assessment methods at the workplace
Radiation chemistry of polymers (research of physical, thermomechanical and chemical properties of polymer compositions and materials); research on the properties of liquid crystalline polymers and its blends with thermoplastics polymers and elastomers; research on the polymer nanocomposites

Professional Activities and Memberships
Council member of the Federation of European Ergonomics Societies
Council member of the International Ergonomics Association
Board member of the Latvian Ergonomics Society
Member of Professor of Chemistry Council (University of Latvia)
Member of Promotion Council in Chemistry (University of Latvia)
Member of Promotion Council in Chemical TechnologyP02 (Riga Technical university)
Member of Latvian Material Research Society
Member of the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Expert Commission of the Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia
Member of Latvian Council of Science Expert Committee (Scientific Principles of Technology: Materials, Chemistry and Pharmacy)
Member of Habilitation and Promotion Council of the Institute of Polymer Mechanics (University of Latvia)
Main Publications in Ergonomics (together over 300 publications, 12 textbooks, chapters of books and 30 patents)


Member of Management Team (Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia) for the establishment of National Cyclotron Centre


