Bringing laser to sunlight

6th WFLD-ED Congress

Save the date: September 2017 will bring laser to sunlight with the joint event of the 6th WFLD-ED Congress and the 5th WALED Congress being held in sunny Thessaloniki, Greece. Organising Committee Chairman Dr Dimitris Strakas, Scientific Committee Chairman Prof. Dr Norbert Gutknecht and AALZ Business Development Manager Leon Vanweersch took the time to shine a light on the exclusive features of this special congress in the following interview.

Professor Gutknecht, as CEO of WFLD, what is your opinion about laser dentistry improvements and how will this 6th European Laser Congress help to promote the use of laser even further amongst dentists?

During the last five years, we have seen a lot of improvements in the field of laser dentistry. New lasers have entered the market and treatment concepts have been established to improve the success of dental treatment. I expect from the upcoming 6th WFLD-ED Congress in Thessaloniki that a large number of dentists will come in contact with the use of lasers and its benefits. This will create a growing interest in this technology.

You have already visited Thessaloniki and also supervised the preparations. Tell us a few words about the location and the organisation so far.

The location is very attractive. Not only is it a good place for the scientific programme, but also for a lot of social activities. This city is an extraordinary place. The local organisation is led by a person with a very high dedication to our Federation and to the use of lasers, thus his engagement is extremely high. Also his connection to the authorities of the University and to its professors is very helpful and beneficial for the preparation of the congress.

You will be also hosting the major event of the 16th World Federation Congress in Berlin next year, which coincides with the 30 year anniversary of ISLD (International Congress for Laser in Dentistry). Can you please update our readers on this very important meeting?

I am very happy that you have brought up this question. Indeed, it will be an extraordinary meeting in Berlin, not only because it is the World Congress, but also because we are celebrating it in the city of Albert Einstein—the father of the laser idea. I am sure that a large number of participants will come to Berlin and we are very dedicated and motivated to prepare a scientific programme of excellence. But due to the fact that we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of ISLD, we will also host a special party for our participants which will be a remarkable social event. I think it is a positive must to join this congress if you are a real laser enthusiast.
Dr Strakas, as the Chairman of WFLD-ED, can you please tell us your goals for the upcoming 6th European Laser Congress?

First of all, I want to thank OEMUS MEDIA AG and laser: international magazine of laser dentistry for their invaluable help. Coming to your question, I am honoured to host the 6th WFLD-ED Congress in my country and the city of Thessaloniki. My bonds with this beautiful city go very deep since I have lived here during my undergraduate studies, but also now as we have established the first laser clinic in Greece at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

This year we reach the ten-year anniversary after the first WFLD-ED Congress in Nice, France. The goals of these congresses are always the same: to gather and disseminate the current knowledge in laser dentistry and provide the highest possible scientific quality presentations.

From my side, I would like to achieve after many years to have a great “laser party” both in terms of science and social events. This will strengthen the bonds between laser users worldwide and also the dynamics of our European Division, which always plays an important role in WFLD.

This is already happening: the registrations that we have received so far are from a big variety of countries, not only Greece and Europe, but globally with countries such as Egypt, Iran, Israel, Brazil, Colombia, Turkey and even Canada.

Finally, I am more than grateful to our sponsors. It is a very rare occasion that a European Laser Congress will have such a large number of laser companies in the exhibition area, whilst all of them are leaders in the field of dental laser system devices.

What was the inspiration for the congress motto “Bringing Laser to Sunlight”? We all know that lasers have a direct association to electromagnetic radiation and light. It is also widely known that our country is renowned for its amount of sunshine and quality of light, both in Europe and worldwide. So the motto was brought up spontaneously by association. We want to bring together the photons of the coherent, monochromatic laser light with those of the Greek sunlight. In the same manner, our congress logo combined the famous artwork “Umbrellas” by the great sculptor Giorgios Zoggolopoulos in the awarded new promenade of Thessaloniki with the colours representing the different wavelengths of the visible spectrum.

What are the subjects of the congress and how can this be helpful for the laser user in his everyday practice?

Our esteemed invited speakers are internationally renowned for their work and research in the field of laser dentistry. The subjects of the scientific programme will cover the whole spectrum of the wavelengths that are currently used in dentistry. That means that the participant will not only discover the basic principles, but moreover all indications of laser applications including periodontology, endodontics, operative dentistry, oral surgery, paediatric dentistry, photodynamic therapy, prosthetics and implantology.

With an abundance of oral and poster presentations we will cover the needs of colleagues that are currently entering the fascinating world of laser dentistry as well as the needs of advanced laser users who want to follow up on new technological improvements and recent studies in this field.
Mr Vanweersch, as manager of WALED, can you please tell us some things about the World Academy and its goals?

WALED—the abbreviation of World Academy for Laser Education in Dentistry—is the alumni club of the Mastership/Fellowship and Master of Science programmes in Lasers in Dentistry of Aachen Dental Laser Center (AALZ) at RWTH Aachen University, Germany. Membership of this association is exclusively limited to students, graduates and alumni of these programmes in the field of lasers in dentistry. With WALED, we have established a worldwide academic and educational network in dental laser therapy. With respect to our vision of lifelong learning we provide our members the unique possibility to upgrade their knowledge every year with the newest developments in basic and clinical research.

Why did you select Thessaloniki for this 5th WALED Congress?

One of our closest and longest academic co-workers, Dr Dimitris Strakas, is the Organising Chairman and the Chairman of the European Division of WFLD. Due to the fact that our WALED members are spread around the globe, we try every year to give our members the highest value for their participation in our congress, and this is why we decided to organize a joint congress of WALED and WFLD-ED. Furthermore, the city of Thessaloniki definitely is a highly attractive motivation to participate in this congress, due to the unique location at the seaside, the touristic possibilities, and the very nice weather during the congress days in September. On top, the congress hotel selected by us, the five-star Makedonia Palace Hotel, will be one of the best locations ever for organising such a congress, providing the best-possible background to the events we will offer our participants.

It seems to be a universal truth for the dentists participating in your events that the programme and social events related to it are of the highest quality. What can a dentist expect when registering for the upcoming joined WALED/WFLD-ED Congress in Thessaloniki?

In addition to the high quality of all presentations in the WALED Congress and the two very interesting congress days of WFLD-ED, we offer our participants a unique, all-inclusive package, which also includes our WALED Get-Together Party on 21 September, the welcome cocktail reception on Friday, 22 September and the Gala Dinner on Saturday, 23 September as well as all coffee and lunch breaks during all three congress days. When WALED members book before 1 June, they can enjoy all of this for an all-inclusive registration fee of 350 Euro.

Thank you for the interview.