

Matey Dragomirov Mateev (1940-2010)

Matey Mateev, a leading Bulgarian scientist and eminent theoretical physicist, perished together with his wife Rumiana Mateeva in a car accident near Sofia on 25 July. A teacher of generations of physicists and an organizer of scientific activities, he was dedicated to international collaboration in science.



Mateev

Mateev was born in Sofia on 10 April 1940, the son of a medical doctor in a family that was part of the old Bulgarian intelligentsia. Graduating at Sofia University, "St. Kliment Ohridski", in 1963 he became an assistant professor of theoretical physics in the university's faculty of physics. International collaboration played an important role in his career from the start. Early in his professional life Mateev won a one-year grant to work at the newly founded International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste. Later, from 1971, he worked for a decade in the Laboratory of Theoretical Physics at JINR in Dubna, where he gained his PhD and a Doctor of Science degree (for a dissertation on the concept of fundamental length in high-energy physics). In 1983 he became full professor at Sofia University, where he taught for 25 years. In 2003 he was elected a member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

International collaboration has also been a vital element in the development of Bulgarian physics. As an established scientist in his own right, it was natural for Mateev to use his influence - as a minister of national education in the years 1990-1991, and later - to promote international collaboration with Bulgarian physicists for the benefit of future generations. He was, in particular, instrumental in Bulgaria's admission to CERN as a member state in 1999 and he represented his country on the CERN Council in the period 1999-2000. He was also a member of the Scientific Council of JINR from 1993 and chair of the Bulgarian Union of Physicists from 2001.

Mateev was involved in many other activities, participating in work ranging from high-temperature superconductivity to crystal growth. In recent years he wrote, together with Alexander Donkov who passed away a year ago, the first advanced textbook on quantum mechanics in Bulgarian. He continued until the last day of his life his work with Vladimir Kadyshevsky from JINR on a quantum field theory with fundamental length.

Matey, known as Mag by those close to him, was a kind and warm person. He naturally attracted people and had good friends in many countries around the world. We shall miss him.

His colleagues and friends.