

ESTRO Board Elections

Meet the Candidates

INTERVIEW WITH **Vratislav Strnad**

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When Vratislav Strnad talks about his work in Germany, he points to concrete structures: certified training programs, designated Centers of Excellence, systematic pathways for learning brachytherapy techniques. The radiation oncologist from Bohemian Canada, who joined the University Hospital Erlangen in 1991, has spent his career building frameworks—in national societies, in the GEC-ESTRO committee, in clinical trial design—and now he wants to bring that systematic approach to the ESTRO board.

What's your ESTRO story, and what motivated you to pursue Board membership?

As a young physician, I had the privilege of being part of the pan-European radiation oncology community from the very beginning. Coming from Eastern Europe, I was able to fully benefit from the breadth of ESTRO's expertise—learning, shaping, and defending innovative therapeutic concepts through dialogue with leading experts, as well as designing and conducting new studies. Today, I am eager to give back to ESTRO's members, sharing my knowledge and experience with energy, commitment, and full dedication.

As radiation oncologists, today, we face numerous challenges that extend beyond our specialty. There are significant advancements across related fields—most notably in immunology—but we must also recognize transformative innovations like Flash therapy and AI, which are poised to fundamentally reshape our practice in the years ahead. In all these developments, it is ESTRO's responsibility to stay at the forefront, coordinate progress, lead innovation, and support its members.



How do you see ESTRO strengthening its partnerships across disciplines, and what experience do you bring in building consensus across different professional communities?

Strengthening partnerships between ESTRO and societies from all related disciplines is a condition sine qua non for the future of both ESTRO and radiation oncology as a whole. Without close, structured, and sustained interdisciplinary collaboration, our specialty cannot fully contribute to optimal patient care. Therefore, expanding and deepening these partnerships is not optional—it is essential.

ESTRO can strengthen its role by proactively engaging with clinical, scientific, and professional societies across oncology and related fields, fostering joint initiatives in education, guidelines, research, and advocacy. Creating shared platforms for dialogue, co-developed scientific programs, and coordinated policy positions will help align goals and build mutual trust.

I bring extensive experience in building consensus across diverse professional communities. I have served for more than 20 years as Chair of the DEGRO Working Group on Brachytherapy in Germany and have been actively involved in multiple ESTRO committees, including the Scientific Committee, P&P Council, Guidelines Committee, and GEC-ESTRO committee. These roles have required continuous collaboration across disciplines, institutions, and cultures. I am confident that this experience equips me well to contribute effectively at Board level, serving all ESTRO members and further strengthening ESTRO's position through meaningful partnerships.

What does ESTRO's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion mean to you in practice, and how would you ensure all members feel valued and heard?

For me, diversity, equity, and inclusion are fundamental principles that must be actively lived every day, not simply stated as values. In practice, this means creating an environment within ESTRO where all members—regardless of background, gender, geography, career stage, or discipline—have equal opportunities to contribute, to be heard, and to participate in decision-making.

At the same time, diversity and inclusion should not exist in isolation. Knowledge, expertise, empathy, and humanity are equally essential and must remain central to how we select leaders, shape programs, and allocate responsibilities. As physicians and scientists, our shared commitment is ultimately to our patients, and their well-being must always guide our actions.

I would ensure that all members feel valued by promoting transparent processes, balanced representation, open dialogue, and respectful collaboration—fostering a culture where diverse perspectives strengthen ESTRO's mission and improve patient care.

What do you see as the most pressing challenges facing radiation oncology and ESTRO, and how would you contribute to strategic discussions about priorities and resource allocation?

The most pressing challenge facing radiation oncology — and ESTRO in particular — is to strengthen the role of our specialty in delivering optimal health outcomes for all patients. Achieving this goal requires a clear and focused strategy



built on four key pillars: artificial intelligence (AI), members and advocacy, education, and science.

First, AI will profoundly shape the future of radiation oncology at all levels. ESTRO must remain the central point of reference for AI-related developments in our field — without becoming a substitute for human expertise or judgment. Our task is to critically assess, guide, and actively promote the meaningful use of AI, ensuring it enhances clinical practice, research, and education for the benefit of our members and patients.

Second, ESTRO must strengthen partnerships across related disciplines and deepen engagement with national societies. Ensuring geographical balance, direct representation, and active collaboration is essential. Growing and diversifying the membership base, increasing ESTRO's visibility at EU and national levels, and re-engaging experienced experts after the completion of their formal mandates will reinforce advocacy and collective impact.

Third, education remains a core mission. High-quality scientific output from ESTRO congresses and journals must be translated into accessible, practice-oriented formats. Sustainable international courses, innovative educational platforms, and a structured "Best of ESTRO" concept will better connect the Annual Congress with satellite events and everyday clinical work.

Finally, science must continue to guide priorities and resource allocation, ensuring innovation is clinically relevant, evidence-based, and equitably accessible. Drawing on my long-standing experience in national societies and ESTRO committees, I would actively support these strategic priorities

and help ensure ESTRO remains a strong, inclusive, and forward-looking scientific society.

What impact do you hope to have made by the end of your term, and how would you measure whether you've served ESTRO's membership effectively?

By the end of my term, I hope to have contributed to making ESTRO a stronger, more successful, and more connected society—one that is attractive to a growing and diverse membership and firmly positioned at the center of multidisciplinary oncology. I would like ESTRO to be recognized not only for scientific excellence, but also for its ability to bring people together across disciplines, countries, and career stages.

A key impact would be measurable growth in ESTRO's membership, expanded and sustainable educational offerings, and increased participation in high-quality teaching courses. Equally important, I would aim to strengthen strategic collaborations—particularly with ASTRO, ESGO, ESSO, and ESMO—so that ESTRO plays a leading role in shaping and coordinating multidisciplinary oncological research.

I would measure whether I have served ESTRO's members effectively through clear indicators: increased member engagement and retention, strong attendance and positive feedback for educational activities, visible outcomes from interdisciplinary partnerships, and ESTRO's enhanced presence and influence within the broader oncology community. Ultimately, success would be reflected in a Society that better supports its members and more effectively advances patient-centered, multidisciplinary cancer care.



Beyond the profession, what do you love doing when you're not thinking about work?

Outside my profession, my greatest joy is my family — my wife and our three children. I love spending time with them in nature, exploring forests, meadows, and lakes, typically off-road with my Land Rover Defender, whether in Romania, the Alps, or the forests of Bohemian Canada, where I was born. In addition, my Christian faith is very important to me because it has always helped me through good and bad times.

