



Fifth SEETRO meeting - Skopje, North Macedonia, 7-9 October 2022

The regional congress for radiation therapists (RTTs) under the South and East Europe technology in radiation oncology (SEETRO) initiative came about after feedback from the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology/International Atomic Energy Agency (ESTRO/IAEA) “train the trainers” project. Southern and eastern European countries that participated in this project developed a series of locally organised courses, which in time, through collaboration among these countries, resulted in a collaborative regional meeting.

The first SEETRO meeting was held in Belgrade, Serbia, in 2013; the second in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2015; after that, in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 2017; in 2019 in Ljubljana, Slovenia; and this time, after a year's delay due to the coronavirus pandemic, in Skopje, North Macedonia, in 2022. The congress was organised by the Association of Radiological Technologists from North Macedonia with co-organisers, the Croatian Association of Radiation Technologists, the Serbian Society of Radiotherapy Technicians (SSRTT), the Radiotherapy Technicians Association of Turkey and the Association of Medical Radiology Engineers in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A total of 130 participants from eight countries participated in this congress; the national societies from six of these countries are members of the ESTRO RTT Alliance. This congress was endorsed by ESTRO.

The congress was held in the amphitheatre of the Faculty of Medicine of the University Clinics Hospital Complex Mother Teresa, Skopje, and workshops were held in the radiotherapy department. The main topic of the congress was RTT education and development of the profession, which was encapsulated in the title “Becoming an RTT – education, certification and career”. Three ESTRO speakers – Mary Coffey (Ireland), Michelle Leech (Ireland) and Patrick Scheerer (Germany) - each gave lectures, as did eight invited speakers and 12 presenters from organiser and co-organiser countries.

The first day of the congress was dedicated to RTT education. The lectures and debates disclosed a mixed situation of progress and stagnation of formal education of RTTs in SEETRO countries. The presentations given on the second day proved how important the role of the RTT had been in the development of the radiotherapy system. On the final day, workshops covered the topics of access to new technology and the importance of maintenance of the patient's position and immobilisation during radiotherapy.

This fifth SEETRO meeting confirmed the importance of regional co-operation among RTT national societies. The presidents and representatives of the organiser societies agreed further steps that should be taken to strengthen co-operation and to improve the position of RTTs in southern and eastern Europe. The sixth SEETRO congress will take place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in September 2023, and the seventh will take place in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2025. Between these two congresses, a hybrid in-person and online course will be organised, and in Istanbul, another meeting on the topic of education will be held before the SEETRO congress.

These announcements show that SEETRO continues to work with the support of the ESTRO community and we intend to keep ESTRO members informed of many more developments from this region.



Participants



Mary Coffey and Phil with co-organiser



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