



YOUNG

Interview with Chiara Gasparotto, ESTRO deputy chief executive

What is your name and where are you from?

My name is Chiara Gasparotto and I am from Vicenza, a town in the northeast of Italy.

What is your job / what are your responsibilities at the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) and how long have you worked with ESTRO?

I am the deputy chief executive officer (CEO) at ESTRO. Together with (and thanks to!) the various dedicated teams, I manage the Society's activities in the fields of education, science and society affairs, in accordance with the [vision](#) and strategy set by the ESTRO Board.

In 2020, because of the pandemic and the many changes that came along, we had the opportunity to check the organisational structure and make sure that within the organigram we were covering all activities efficiently, and that we had a coherent reporting system. It was settled that I would take care of the more traditional ESTRO activities such as the ESTRO School, the scientific projects and governance, while our CEO Alessandro Cortese would manage everything to do with business development and innovation, finance, strategy, and ESTRO events. In addition, we share the responsibilities of running the office and making sure, at least as much as possible, that ESTRO is a good place to work.

I have been working here for more than 10 years now, and I have held various positions, in education and society affairs. Every day is unique, with challenges and opportunities, and many interesting interactions. There's never a dull moment at ESTRO!

What is your education/background?

I have a master's degree in public relations from the University of Udine, Italy. I have also an executive master's in international association management, which I gained while working at ESTRO.

Where did you work before ESTRO?

I worked for two small consultancy firms, both based in Brussels before I joined ESTRO. They were active in the management of European Union (EU) funding programmes and events. In relation to each of these interests, I managed a newsletter for Italian universities that was focused on EU grants in the areas of research, technology and education; and I was part of the team that organised European meetings and congresses in the field of financial services.

How did you end up working for ESTRO?

Somewhat by chance, I must say. The consultancy I was working with at the time was mostly active in the field of financial services, and 2008 with its financial crisis did not help the business of organising events in that field. So, I discussed with my boss what I should do, as it was very likely that my contract would not be renewed. We agreed that my strong suits were project management and most of all an ability to connect people. He told me that ESTRO – where one of his previous colleagues was working – was looking for a project manager and he suggested that I apply, as he could imagine me there. I applied and - here I am.

What did you know about radiation oncology before starting at ESTRO?

Not much really. I knew it existed – my father is a (now retired) radiographer, so some of the terms were familiar to me – but I did not know anything about the professions involved in the delivery of radiotherapy and its teamwork, nor about its application and contribution to multidisciplinary care.

What are the exciting new developments/projects/ that you are looking forward to at ESTRO?

It is an exciting time. The pandemic was undoubtedly a difficult period, but it also offered the opportunity to take a step back and appreciate the value of the many ESTRO activities that we offer and assess how we can better serve the radiotherapy community. There are, I believe, three main developments that will be central for me in the near future: first, I am looking forward to the implementation of the revised governance structure. ESTRO governance is the backbone of our daily jobs and will support ESTRO as it grows. Second, we will hold a strategy retreat in the next few months. Despite the pandemic, we have advanced toward reaching the goals set in the Vision 2030 plan, but at a slower pace, and it will be important for the Board, councils and committees to retreat together to revise where we stand, to check whether we are on track, and to set the direction for the years to come, so that we can make the necessary business plan. Finally, and specifically, regarding office management, the hot topic will be work-life balance, since in Belgium, where the head office is based, there are many new developments – remote working, the right to disconnect, the four-day week... – and I am eager to see how we can best accommodate the needs of ESTRO staff. This is maybe something for further discussion in a future interview!



Chiara Gasparotto
Deputy CE, ESTRO

