



RTT

Interview with Ludwig VAN DEN BERGHE, re-elected RTT Alliance representative



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Congratulations on winning the election as RTT Alliance representative for a second term. How do you feel?

Of course I really am pleased to be re-elected. I know that in my country, colleagues from the professional organisations have supported me well, partly because the European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) is very important to us in defining our role as radiotherapists (RTTs). But I suspect that my candidacy was also supported from other countries, which of course makes me happy.

Based on your experience of being an RTT Alliance representative in the past three years, why is your role as RTT Alliance representative important?

First of all, it is very important to make RTTs from Europe and across the world part of ESTRO. Our role will become more important in the future and we must come together as one group with doctor and physicist colleagues and others to design and administer the best treatment for our patients. In addition, we have to create bridges to connect as RTTs. Basic training for RTTs must be uniform, in accordance with that offered to other professional groups.

How would you define the achievements of the RTT Alliance over the past three years and what next steps do you see?

Filipe (Cidade de Moura, from the Portuguese Association of Radiation Therapists, who was previously also an RTT Alliance representative) and I were given carte blanche to define our role. We have both tried to establish links with other countries, at which we succeeded. In addition, we assessed the specific wishes of the affiliated members on two occasions, via questionnaires. During the 2019 ESTRO congress in Milan, we organised a meet and greet session for RTTs, which drew positive feedback. I want to focus on improving cooperation with professional organisations through the set-up of a fixed and recurring framework. I have felt the lack of interaction that was caused by Covid-19 for the last two years and would like to counteract this.

Do you foresee any challenges for RTTs that will have to be addressed during your term as RTT Alliance representative?

An important challenge will be the drawing up of our framework as representatives of the alliance and being able to include our partners in the story. Formation of a group of all the alliance partners will be a big goal!

In addition to your role as RTT Alliance representative, what has been your involvement in ESTRO, and particularly in the RTT community?

As a representative of the RTT Alliance I am also part of the National Societies Committee, on which among other tasks I try to make links with professional organisations. I am involved as a radiotherapist in the new quality improvement project of this group.

Within the RTT Committee (RTTC), I will be co-chair and chair of the RTT track during the conferences of 2022 and 2023. As a nurse and member of the RTTC, I have the privilege of being able to participate in the preparation of new guidelines regarding management of radiation skin reactions.

What do you enjoy most about your activities as an RTT?

I am lucky enough to be able to take on very diverse tasks. I feel a boost to enjoy going to work every day due to my roles as lead of the RTTs within my department (creating links with the staff, patients and policymakers), coordinator of education for RTTs in Flanders where I am chairman of the Association of Nurses working in Radiotherapy and Oncology in Flanders, a nurse consultant for the gynaecological pelvic patients in our department, and by my participation in national and international conferences.

How do you cope with balancing your undertakings in your department, ESTRO and of course your family?

I am lucky to have a partner who fully supports me in being able to realise all these tasks. Over the years I have learned how to organise my working weeks and to combine my work with my vacation. But being able to collaborate with colleagues within ESTRO gives me energy and ensures that I can continue to motivate myself to focus further on all my duties.

