



# Società Italiana di Chirurgia Colo-Rettale

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## First President's Page for 2013

This year, everyone at ECCO – the European CanCer Organisation started 2013 with renewed vigour, and a strong sense of focus due to both our refreshed vision and mission, and the fact that 2013 is the year of the European Cancer Congress (ECC 2013) – the largest multidisciplinary platform for advancing oncology in Europe. As the 17th ECCO - 38th ESMO - 32nd ESTRO Congress, this meeting enables ECCO to proactively work towards our vision by integrating the expertise and insights of the different professions and stakeholders in the oncology community in a very tangible way, to achieve the best possible patient outcomes.

Held in partnership with ESO 33, EACR, EONS and SIOPE, ECC 2013 focuses once again on multidisciplinary, which we passionately believe helps to ensure that all cancer patients get timely access to expert advice, treatment and care from oncology professionals with the most relevant specialist knowledge and skills. Multidisciplinary also enables continuity of care, including provision of adequate information and support for patients.

Our Congress also helps us make concrete progress towards our mission, as well as our specific objective of creating an environment in which the oncology community network is always optimised for each patient, the achievement of which requires determination and the creation of a real connection between all oncology stakeholders. We at ECCO believe that we are in a unique position to achieve this, as the only multidisciplinary and multi-professional organisation that connects and responds to all stakeholders in oncology Europe-wide.

I also believe that a sense of renewed focus and vigour is being felt throughout the wider oncology community this year. This is due, in part, to the outcome of the [World Oncology Forum](#) that I attended last year. Organised by the European School of Oncology in partnership with *The Lancet*, I was honoured to be one of the one hundred experts from the oncology community invited to attend, along with leading cancer clinicians and researchers, advocacy leaders representing important patient organisations, and journalists with a strong track record of reporting cancer stories.



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This two-day meeting was held with the specific purpose of evaluating the progress that has been made to date in the war against cancer. As President of ECCO, my goal in attending was to ensure that multidisciplinary was well represented during the discussions. The outcome was agreement that current strategies for controlling cancer are not working. While the oncocommunity has had many successes in saving lives or improving quality of life and reducing suffering, it is clear that many preventable cancers are still occurring, and people are still dying from preventable, detectable and treatable cancers.

In other words, cancer is becoming more common everywhere in the world, despite positive advancements in knowledge, technology, treatment strategies, etc, and despite all the hard work from ECCO and our members in promoting the multidisciplinary approach. Yet there seems to be an apparent lack of response from national and global leaders in dealing with this escalating crisis. Delegates at the WOF decided that more concrete action is needed to both raise awareness levels and make concrete progress in tackling the escalation in suffering and death from cancer.

That is why a 10-point action plan was identified to help stem the tide. The key point is that these actions are achievable on a worldwide basis, and have been shown to work. Most importantly, this action plan was recently published as the **Stop Cancer Now!** Campaign on World Cancer Day (4 February) by the oncology community. This widespread campaign stands as a formal appeal to governments and policymakers to both *acknowledge* and *do* something about the scale of human and economic suffering caused by cancer. As this is a major aim of ECCO's oncopolicy efforts, we wholeheartedly support the campaign. Pursuing this 10-point plan could not only save lives, it could also help governments fulfil the commitments made at the World Health Assembly in May 2012 to cut preventable deaths from non-communicable diseases by 25 percent by 2025.

A major aim of ECCO is to help all stakeholders grasp and respond to the immense challenges posed by cancer in Europe, and to seize opportunities by enhancing knowledge about scientific and clinical advances in the field. ECCO has consistently demonstrated the power of multidisciplinary towards cancer prevention, treatment and care over the years.

Our multidisciplinary approach towards EU policymakers is proving to be equally effective, helping the oncocommunity and health professionals deliver on promises to patients by building a unified voice to both represent and draw attention to our policy concerns. We are very aware of the fact that the policy environment underpins Europe's fight against the disease, and ECCO's oncopolicy efforts are helping shape the EU political landscape.

That is why we believe that the WOF represents an outstanding opportunity for the oncology community to be the agents of change and bring about a paradigm shift in the approach to cancer. Cancer should no longer be viewed as too big a challenge to tackle by either the policy or oncology communities.



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This has been a major theme reflected in all ECCO's endeavours to affect the development of oncopolicy to date. The 10-point plan outlines a workable strategy on how this challenge could be met and solved. It is therefore essential that every member of our community takes up this message and spreads the word as far and as wide as possible.

Every cancer patient deserves the best, and our oncocommunity has united to provide one of the best tools to achieve that. In line with the signatories of the 'Stop Cancer Now!' Campaign, and our vision and mission, ECCO calls on both the oncopolicy and oncology communities to work together to use this strategy and achieve our common goal of making sure that patients get the best prevention, diagnosis and treatment strategies and care.

## Cornelis van de Velde

ECCO President

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