

# Welcome to ESGE at 60 years



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## Bibliography

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As the saying goes, “time flies”. It is hard to believe that ESGE is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thus, each month in 2024, in the journal *Endoscopy*, the ESGE’s official publication organ, we will feature a special article as part of a series of activities for “ESGE – Celebrating 60 Years of Advancing Quality in GI Endoscopy! As an introduction to this series, we wish to provide both some historical background on the ESGE and an overview on the upcoming special articles that will detail the current pathways that ESGE is on to achieve its mission and goals as a major medical society. We hope you will enjoy these articles shining a light on ESGE’s past, present, and future.

ESGE has significantly evolved from a club, aimed at promoting GI endoscopy amongst an increasing number of enthusiasts during its first decades, to during the last decade becoming a democratic, diverse, and inclusive structure based on the society’s vision of “working together in endoscopy to achieve optimal patient care”. The core values of ESGE were clearly stated in ESGE’s 1<sup>st</sup> strategic plan (2021–2024), being patient centered, collaborative, inclusive, and showing integrity and scientific rigor. Today, ESGE is unquestionably “the” European society where GI endoscopists seek evidence-based guidance, curricula and training, education, and the latest in scientific advancements and innovations in GI endoscopy.

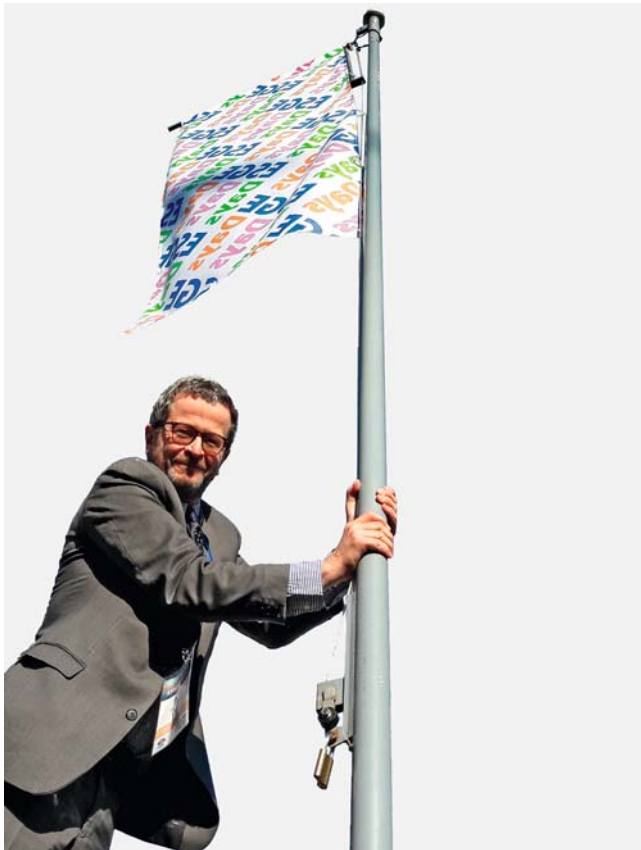
To first provide you with some historical perspective, in the early 1960s, with the increasingly emerging role of the “gastro camera” being discussed at gastroenterology meetings, a group of European endoscopists formed the “European Endoscopic Club” that focused on promoting GI endoscopy. Soon thereafter, in 1964, at the “Association des Sociétés Nationales Européennes et Méditerranéennes de Gastroentérologie” Congress in Brussels, the members of the club convened with other interested endoscopists and together formed the European Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ESGE). This process of

bringing more elements to the “family”, continued during the next 60 years, and today ESGE is an umbrella organization representing 41 gastroenterology / endoscopy member societies from Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East; and over 4,000 ESGE individual members from all over the world (► Fig. 1).

In 2007, an “individual” ESGE membership program was launched and, since 2008, ESGE also offers “dual membership”



► Fig. 1 ESGE member societies spanning Europe and beyond.



► **Fig. 2** Thierry Ponchon, ESGE President 2016 – 2018. Prof. Ponchon was the driving force who brought the first ever ESGE Days to fruition.



► **Fig. 3** ESGE Days 2023 held at the Dublin Convention Centre.



► **Fig. 4** Live demonstrations of endoscopy, an invaluable learning opportunity at ESGE Days.

to all ESGE member societies and their members. More recently, in 2022, as a further sign of its growth and maturity, ESGE established the honorary designation “Fellow” of ESGE (FESGE). FESGE is an honorary title bestowed upon an individual by the ESGE in recognition of significant professional achievement and superior competence within the field of gastrointestinal endoscopy through research, professional service, education, and/or clinical care.

Also, in 2016, the first election of the president of the society by the governing board occurred and in 2023, the election of all committee chairs with voting rights, permits the society to be recognized as a democratic structure, where anyone and everyone can serve. Since the first ESGE president, Charles Debray from Paris, France, there have been 24 presidents from 12 different countries who have led the ESGE, and currently there are more than 200 ESGE members actively participating on our various committees and working groups.

In 2018, ESGE established its endoscopy congress, ESGE Days, holding its first meeting in April in Budapest (► **Fig. 2**, ► **Fig. 3**). The congress is now held annually with a varied and diverse scientific program based on ESGE quality standards, where gastroenterologists, surgeons, and nurses gather to explore three days of scientific activities solely dedicated to GI endoscopy...from basic to advanced (► **Fig. 4**).

Last, the current structure and workflow of ESGE encourages and allows the society to interact and collaborate with other European gastroenterology/hepatology societies including ESGENA, UEG, WEO, EASL and ECCO. These collaborations encourage and promote advancements in quality of GI practice worldwide by interacting with other disciplines and professions in the field of GI care.

The next 11 “special articles” will address the different committees and working groups detailing how ESGE delivers its mission to educate, innovate, disseminate, support, and promote quality in the practice of GI endoscopy. We will include perspectives from those currently leading the society on how ESGE will continue to serve in the fields of guidelines, education, endoscopic research, and other society documents, but also, how ESGE will keep an “EYE” on the future, including the diversity of our community. We will also explore the urgent need to become “greener” and other future challenges.

We hope you will enjoy these special articles during 2024! Happy 60<sup>th</sup> birthday ESGE!

### Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.