
Prof. Dr. Mathias Prokop Elected as ESR 2nd Vice-President



The European Society of Radiology (ESR) elected Mathias Prokop 2nd Vice-President.

Prof. Prokop is set to steer the discipline towards a future where radiologists play a more visible, valuable role, increasingly engaging in multidisciplinary teams and enhancing patient interactions. This progressive vision aims to elevate the significance of radiology in the decades ahead.

Prof. Prokop, leveraging his achievements as the former chair of the Dutch Radiological Society, acknowledges the array of challenges currently facing the field. These include the increasing workloads, financial pressures, the trend of radiological practices being acquired by investors, declining job satisfaction, and the rapidly evolving role of AI. While AI offers the promise of better quality and less stress, it also poses the threat of altering the traditional role of radiologists.

During his tenure with the Dutch Radiological Society, Prof. Prokop played a pivotal role in formulating a common vision for the future of radiology. This vision anticipates a shift for radiologists from primarily focusing on diagnostic reports to embracing more impactful tasks. Such a transition is vital to maintain the importance of radiologists, even as AI becomes more prevalent in the reporting process.

Prof. Prokop aims to use his extensive experience to build upon the existing programs of ESR, refining a common vision for European radiologists that could inspire national initiatives. His strategy involves partnering with other diagnostic specialties to establish a more central role for radiologists in multidisciplinary teams, and exploring a gatekeeper role in diagnostics to streamline healthcare pathways and ensure patients receive appropriate treatment. This approach necessitates direct patient interaction and adequate compensation for the new roles undertaken by radiologists.

A critical aspect of this vision is the requirement for scientific evidence to support new workflows, aiming to demonstrate to health insurers and governments the cost-effectiveness and improved outcomes of these new care pathways. Prof. Prokop encourages the ESR to foster European cooperation to swiftly demonstrate the impact of strategic changes in clinical pathways.

He cites the breast cancer pathway as an example, where radiology could manage the complete diagnostic process, thereby reducing patient anxiety and saving time and resources. For patients with cancer, a comprehensive staging workup involving radiology, pathology, and genetics could be crucial. Advances like breast MRI and dual energy mammography could revolutionize screening techniques.

As radiology is deeply involved with AI, Prof. Prokop believes radiologists should assume a central role as data specialists. However, he acknowledges the need for additional training and the reduction of clinical burdens to assume these new roles effectively. AI, he asserts, can be a tool for increasing efficiency, although the current systems have limitations. He envisions a role for the ESR in providing guidance to radiology departments and AI companies to facilitate this transition.

Prof. Prokop also notes the past focus on training organ-specific radiologists proficient in multidisciplinary teams, but he acknowledges the neglect of the technical aspects of the field. Comprehensive training for residents and practicing radiologists is necessary to create more data specialists and guide the industry in new technical developments.

Prof. Prokop's motivation for taking on this leadership role is to strengthen the field of radiology and ensure that it continues to be a rewarding profession now and in the future.

Current Affiliation:

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Primary fields of expertise: Body imaging (chest, abdomen, cardiovascular), Screening, CT, AI

Source: [ESR](#)

Published on : Thu, 25 Jan 2024