



ESPR 2023—Building new bridges from Belgrade

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Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

In 2023, we had the honor of organizing the European Society of Pediatric Radiology (ESPR) congress for the first time ever in Serbia, and only for the second time in Southeast Europe. Whenever you organize something for the first time, it represents a unique experience, but at the same time brings up a lot of challenges—those you had expected and some that you did not. Despite all the hurdles, the only feeling we had on the last day of the meeting was a feeling of enormous satisfaction. The feedback we received from attendees concerning the overall organization was amazing, the congress rooms were well crowded throughout the congress, and discussions during the sessions were much beyond our expectations.

The motto of the ESPR 2023 was “Building new bridges,” and we truly hope that we fulfilled this mission, with around 400 participants from 47 countries and all continents.

We represented the whole of Southeast European pediatric radiology, which frankly does not have a central role in European pediatric radiology. Our aim was to enhance relations with the rest of Europe and the world. Numerous contacts have been established, but we do not deceive ourselves that this will be enough. All that we have done represents just a small step towards integration of our region into European pediatric radiology, and without further interactions and collaborations in years to come, it will not mean anything. Pediatric radiology is developing strongly in most of the world, but the focus must be on universal progress, regardless of the part of the world. Each region has something to offer, but it is important to find a proper balance

and ensure benefits fit all and are adapted to the needs of different regions.

One of the main cornerstones of the congress was to simulate everyday practice, which cannot be imagined without radiological/clinical cooperation. For this reason, most sessions included other clinicians (pediatricians or pediatric surgeons, and even pathologists) alongside radiologists.

With the help of Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, we also organized a 3-day workshop dealing with the most current use of contrast-enhanced ultrasound. Our goal was to provide a variety of contents for participants—from prenatal to postnatal diagnostics; from radiographs to the most sophisticated, state-of-the-art modalities and artificial intelligence (AI); from morphological to clinical assessment; from initial diagnosis to follow-up; and from the common everyday clinical problems to very rare disorders—this mini symposium reflects that initiative.

You will refresh and renew your knowledge about juvenile idiopathic arthritis both from radiological [1] and clinical perspectives [2], but also find different insights into very common topics, such as gastro-esophageal reflux and constipation [3]. Important diagnostic hints in imaging of unusual (viral, bacterial, and parasitic) lung infections and their clinical and imaging mimics is presented [4]. As a leading cause of infectious morbidity and mortality in immunocompromised children, a comprehensive review of pulmonary infections in these children is included in this special issue, along with their differential diagnoses [5].

The Fetal Task Force of the ESPR and the European Society of Neuroradiology Pediatric Neuroradiology Committee present recommendations on the prenatal diagnosis, classification, and reporting of spinal dysraphism [6].

You will read about the development of imaging biomarkers as a viable tool to improve the diagnosis and prognosis in pediatric oncology, focusing on neuroblastoma and diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, and how they may become a complete clinical decision aid system [7].

The ESPR Abdominal Taskforce survey brings together interesting worldwide experiences related to image-guided intussusception reduction from 65 institutions [8].

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It is hard to think about the pediatric radiology practice of the future without discussing AI. The article by Ciet et al. highlights a spectrum of AI challenges—from ethics, biases, and limitations to the benefits of AI [9].

We would like to end this editorial by most sincerely thanking all our colleagues who unselfishly offered us help and stood aside us all the way, encouraging us, using their experience to help us and point to the potential weak spots, bringing our ideas to life, and in just three words—being true friends. Also, big credit goes to all participants whose good mood, positive interactions, and well-felt affection to pediatric radiology made this event what it was. Last, but not least, we would like to thank the ESPR Board who gave us this opportunity and believed in us throughout the entire process. We felt your trust and good vibrations.

We hope to go on building new bridges.

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Declarations

Conflicts of interest None

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