

Motivation to serve in the ESGCT Board

The cell and gene therapy field is in a critical phase. 20 years after the initial clinical successes, we see 5-10 new gene therapy drugs approved each year. This is exciting on the one hand and associated with great responsibility on the other. How can we ensure that the development of novel gene therapies picks up even more pace but remains affordable for our healthcare system? How do we ensure the safety of these therapies? How do we ensure that approved gene therapies are accessible to patients, also in Europe? And how do we ensure Europe's competitiveness in this field? These are decisive questions for which I would like to find answers together with my colleagues in the ESGCT Board and you, the members. To this end, I would like to promote more involvement of society members e. g. in finding answers to the above questions, in shaping ESGCT's policy as well as the programs of our annual conferences.

Brief overview to my person: I am a trained molecular biologist and Professor of Cell and Gene Therapy at the University of Freiburg, Germany. Furthermore, I am the Director of the Institute for Transfusion Medicine & Gene Therapy and the Scientific Director of the Center for Chronic Immunodeficiency at the University Medical Center. Before my appointment in Freiburg, I conducted my PhD thesis at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, was a postdoctoral fellow at the Salk Institute in San Diego, USA, Assistant Professor of Molecular Virology at Charité Medical School in Berlin, and Associate Professor of Experimental Hematology at Hannover Medical School. My research focuses on the development of genome editing-based immune cell therapies and hematopoietic stem cell preparations to treat patients suffering from primary immunodeficiencies, HIV infection, and certain types of cancer. I am/was the coordinator of several national and international research consortia, organizer of research conferences, chair of working parties of professional societies, and I currently serve as the president of the German Society for Gene Therapy.

I'd be happy to put my 20 years of experience and expertise in the field at ESGCT's disposal.