

Remembering the XXVI SISET Congress and the 50th anniversary of its foundation, 2020

SISET stands for the Italian Scientific Society for the Study of Thrombosis and Hemostasis. Founded in 1970, it currently enrolls more than 1,000 professionals nationwide. Contributions by SISET scientists range from clinical to experimental investigations and are regularly published in leading international medical journals.

In 2016, I was elected Vice-President of the SISET Board of Directors, and, according to the regulations, I became President for the period 2018-2020. During my tenure, I was tasked with organizing the XXVI National Congress of the Society, originally planned for November 2020. My colleagues on the Society's Board of Directors and I began preparations for the event in November 2019. The chosen location for the Congress was Baveno, a picturesque village on Lake Maggiore, near Milan.

The year 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of SISET, and we intended to celebrate this milestone with a special lecture - a historical overview highlighting the achievements of international research in the field, to which SISET members have significantly contributed. We invited Prof. Giovanni de Gaetano to deliver this lecture, as he is one of the Society's senior members, has made outstanding contributions to the field, and, notably, is highly skilled in addressing such topics.

In early February 2020, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was recognized as a severe respiratory illness. However, at that time, most of us were optimistic that the pandemic would be resolved within a few weeks or months. History has since proven us wrong. Local authorities in Italy, followed by those in other countries, imposed restrictions on gatherings. With subsequent lockdown measures, it became evident that all congresses planned for 2020 - including the ISTH Congress - would be canceled.

By early June 2020, we received confirmation of continued lockdown measures. Although the technical tools for organizing virtual congresses were already available, experience in running such events was still limited. Despite this, we worked diligently to address the many organizational challenges. At the end, the virtual XXVI SISET National Congress was a success, featuring hundreds of abstracts, numerous symposia, and plenary lectures, including the special SISET 50th Anniversary lecture.

I find some consolation in being the first (and, hopefully, the last) SISET President to oversee a virtual National Congress.

Today, years later, SISET has its own official journal, *Bleeding, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology*, with Giovanni de Gaetano as Editor-in-Chief. I am proud to present in this editorial the written version of the special lecture virtually given in 2020, as a conversation between Giovanni de Gaetano and Maria Benedetta Donati. Both the SISET Board of Directors and I owe them our deepest gratitude.

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