

EAES message to SAGES
“Waiting for the day we’ll shake hands again”

Dear Friends, we live strange times where our lives and our profession are challenged by an unprecedented global tragedy. Our families, our colleagues and the whole society are paying a very high price to Covid-19. We have no choice but to cope with it - now and for the near future - and continue to do our best to protect our patients, our team and our loved ones. We must also prepare for a new beginning, that hopefully will soon arrive.

Northern Italy and Spain were heavily hit by the outbreak of Covid-19, are now followed by most European Countries and we are now sadly seeing the same pattern of diffusion affecting New York area and threatening the rest of the United States.

Over a very short period of time we have seen the progressive lock down of our world and we have learned to deal with priorities; to make the best possible choice in a setting of limited resources while our hospitals quickly collapsed, away from any desirable standard. It has been very painful having to postpone so many elective procedures for cancer surgery: we are not dealing with numbers, they are our patients. We would very soon need a common strategy to rescue the ones who were left behind. That also means adapting to new rules and changing our behaviour both in hospital as well as at home. For a long time ahead we’ll be treading on thin ice.

We, and globally, have also learned the value of the medical profession and of our tireless nurses: the fighters of this battle against an invisible enemy. Many of us, including our surgical residents have been deployed in the battlefield to care for infected patients and to support our colleagues in COVID units. Some lost their lives. Something not to be forgotten!

EAES and SAGES the two largest Associations of endoscopic surgeons worldwide have been connected on a weekly basis since the beginning of this pandemic to provide our members common guidelines and useful advices to cope with this challenge. We have been UNITED as never before, also in the belief that tomorrow will be better than today. Perhaps even better than yesterday, as long as we’ll be able to continue using these bonds and keep on working together and - united - take any future challenge of this very small planet.

The good news from us is that social distancing works! We are now seeing a slow, but progressive decline in the number of new positive patients in our European hospitals, particularly in those countries that deployed an early adoption of locking down measures. The spread of the disease was limited in areas away from the initial outbreak, thus saving many lives.

We hope that our friends in the US will take advantage from our earlier experience. Our thoughts and prayers are with you in these difficult times.

We are looking forward to that day when we’ll be able to shake your hands again. In the meantime, EAES is proud to be part of this global community of surgeons.

Prof. Andrea Pietrabissa, Italy - President of EAES
Prof. Salvador Morales-Conde, Spain - President Elect EAES
Prof. Jaan Hendrick Bonjer, The Netherlands - Past President EAES