

ESGE – shining a light on diversity, equity and inclusion



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Bibliography

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The European Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ESGE) was officially established in 1964, and for the past 60 years, ESGE has stood for quality, education, scientific rigor, and promoting research in gastrointestinal endoscopy. The ESGE Days annual congress, numerous workshops, webinars, and of course the guidelines, quality, curriculum, education, and research committees have solidified ESGE's position at the forefront of the global endoscopy community.

ESGE comprises 41 national member societies across Europe, the Mediterranean, and North Africa. It has committed to ensuring the adequate representation of all societies, including underrepresented groups and minorities, to promote the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). DEI means that all persons and groups are included and supported based on their needs, irrespective of their background, culture, or beliefs [1]. DEI has been shown to improve satisfaction, efficiency, and productivity within companies and institutions [2]. Moreover, diverse perspectives and an inclusive healthcare environment are associated with better patient care [3]. It goes without saying that DEI are values that must be supported and integrated into all scientific and educational endeavors. Yet, incorporating and representing these values in the everyday practice of scientific societies comes with challenges and hurdles. Representation disparities, equitable access to training, and limited career advancement opportunities remain the stark reality for most underrepresented groups and minorities, especially in interventional endoscopy and academia.

In its constant strive for excellence, ESGE has identified areas for improvement and implemented strategies to further promote and support DEI within its society. Specifically, the ESGE DEI working group was established in 2021 with the aim of creating avenues and establishing initiatives that will strengthen the principles of DEI within ESGE. The present ESGE position statement on DEI in gastrointestinal endoscopy includes 12

statements that will serve as a framework for all ESGE individual members and its national member societies [4] (► **Fig. 1**). This position statement is unique because it transcends the strictly evidence-based or best-practice recommendations that are usually an integral part of ESGE documents. The 12 points of the position statement include values of equitable fairness, social integrity, and justice. It emphasizes ethical policies that aim to provide opportunities to all groups and subgroups irrespective of tribe or creed. "Humanitas ante omnia" in its full meaning and with the addition of equitable inclusion across all backgrounds.

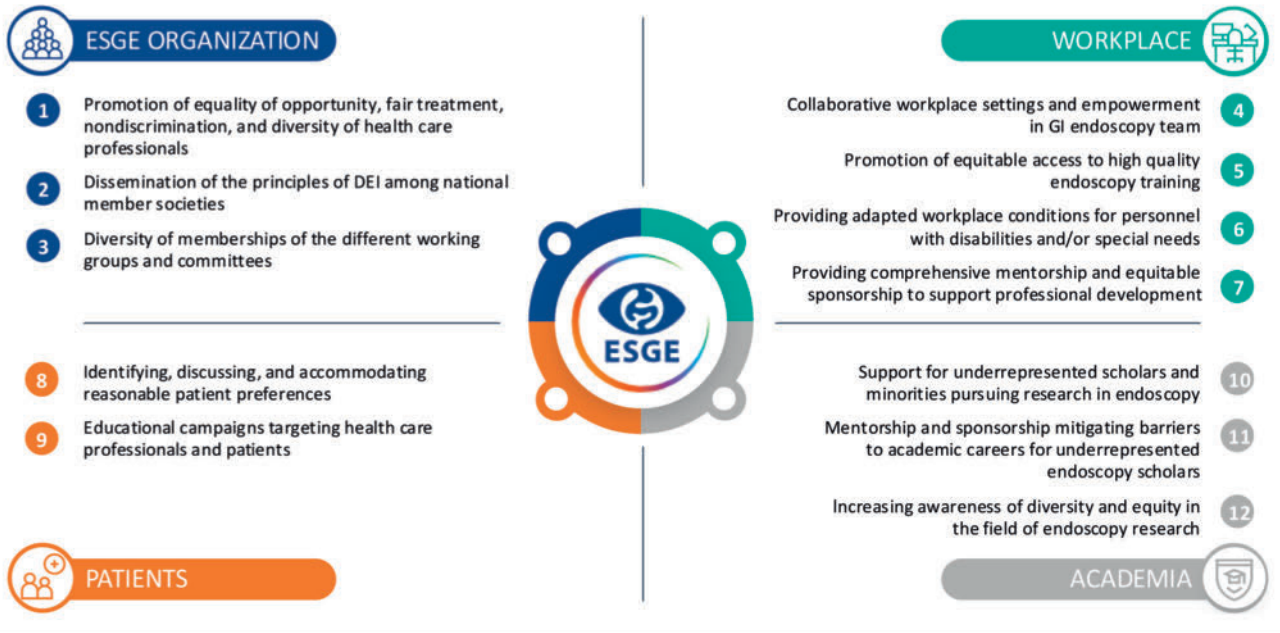
In addition to the position statement on DEI, the working group has established a mentoring program spanning all ESGE member societies, bringing mentees together with experienced and more internationally recognized mentors, again with the idea of creating access to career opportunities, professional exposure, experience, and training. Already in its second year, the ESGE mentorship program has received a flood of positive feedback from participants around the world who have established professional connections even beyond the program's framework.

Finally, an ESGE talent bank was developed to enrich the diversity of individual members qualifying for specific tasks within the society. The talent bank creates a platform for currently underrepresented groups to be included more often and with greater participation, for example in ESGE conference activities, faculty tasks, and other educational or training activities within the society.

With all these initiatives, activities, and even shifts in perspectives, the future of DEI in ESGE appears bright and promising. However, not everything will be a bed of roses because specific challenges need to be addressed and barriers must still be overcome. First and foremost, all changes must be sustainable, and all endeavors should be undertaken with a long-term

ESGE's commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

The European Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy aims to apply these 12 principles within ESGE, at the workplace, with patients, and in academia



► Fig. 1 Diversity, equity and inclusion: ESGE's 12 statements.

impact in mind. DEI involves getting to the core values of a society, slowly but steadily, quietly but efficiently. Given there are 41 member societies making up ESGE, this means there is a diverse collection of beliefs, cultures, practices, religions, and values. DEI must be accepted as universal principles of humanity, irrespective of the background norm within each member society. In some cases, a paradigm shift may even be necessary.

ESGE will continue shining a light on diversity and equity by promoting, encouraging, and rewarding the upliftment of these values. It is a call to action, a rallying cry, a clarion call for all ESGE individual members, ESGE member societies, and all organizations within and even outside of the global endoscopy community to uphold, support, and promote the humane values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in everyday endoscopy practice – bearing in mind that many little drops can eventually fill an ocean.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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