

When I attended my first EORTC QLQ meeting in 2003 (in Graz at the time), I felt a bit lost at first – which session should I go to? What could I contribute? Apart from a name badge, there wasn't much guidance. On the spur of the moment, I decided to go to the cervical cancer session. Eva Greimel led the group with charm and dedication; I was soon involved and felt welcome, becoming part of the 'Gyne Group'. That evening at dinner, I stayed a little longer with a few colleagues from the headquarters. I remember how we laughed together – and it soon felt as though we were friends who'd known each other for ages. I am telling this story because it shows what the EORTC QLQ means to me – a group of enthusiasts who want to and can make a difference in oncology together. A group that overcomes difficulties and communication problems through personal encounters and exchange. A group where there is also room for fun.

This essence has remained, but of course a lot has changed too. We have far more members, far more money, far more projects, and more rules as well. The QLQ Executive Committee (EC) faces up to these changes and helps shape them. That is something I have always particularly valued at the QLQ, alongside the professional and personal exchanges: that solutions are sought and found, even for complex problems.

I have benefited greatly from the work of previous chairs and believe that the time has now come for me to make myself available for this role.

As a chair, I would like to focus on the following areas, amongst others:

- **Exchange and collaboration with the other groups in the EORTC family**
- **Supporting early-career researchers** (much has already been established, which needs to be maintained and refined)
- **Addressing the 'Limits to growth'** (How can we remain active and functional as a group despite rising membership numbers? Balancing the establishment of rules which are necessary with reducing bureaucracy and removing rules which are not helpful any more)

A little about myself: I hold a chair in Quality of Life in Oncology at the Comprehensive Cancer Centre Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Rostock, in Germany. I have previously served on the EORTC QLQ EC twice: as Secretary and as Treasurer. I believe that, apart from the last meeting in Berlin (where I was unfortunately working in Shanghai), I have not missed any of our meetings. I have also been active in the EORTC Head and Neck Cancer Group since 2008 and in the EORTC Thyroid Cancer Group since 2013. We have launched joint projects and published together. That is why collaboration with the Disease Oriented Groups is particularly important to me. In my work, **efficiency and good structures** are very important to me, as are **a friendly, collaborative atmosphere, transparency, openness and fairness**.

I believe that the real strength and creativity of our work lies within and comes from the group. In my view, the chairperson's role is to foster and channel these energies. I am happy to contribute my expertise, power, and time to this end.