Maurizio Vretenar is an accelerator physicist who joined CERN in 1988 to participate in several projects related to design, construction, and operation of linear accelerators. From 2008 to 2017 he has been Project Leader for the construction of Linac4, the new linear injector for the CERN accelerator complex and since 2013 he is the Coordinator the EU-supported projects for particle accelerator R&D. In recent years he has been increasingly active in the design of compact accelerators for societal applications, in particular in the medical field where he is leading a new CERN initiative to advance cancer therapy with compact ion accelerators.