

A EUROPEAN ACT OF UNITY

WORLD CANCER DAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2017

Cancer is a global issue, and on World Cancer Day, we must unite our forces more than ever to advance research in the fight against cancer, to implement better prevention and care policies, and to see patients live longer and better throughout the disease and after. In 2013, more than one and a quarter million people died from cancer in the EU just over one quarter (26.0 %) of the total number of deaths^[1].

In order to tackle the burden of cancer in Europe, we must focus on all aspects of cancer control and ensure policy supports their smooth implementation. This starts with comprehensive prevention policies, including restricting tobacco use, maintaining a healthy body weight, and protecting your skin from harmful UV rays as acknowledged by the European Code against Cancer (ECAC)^[2]. ECAC outlines the 12 steps that everyone in society can follow to reduce the risk of cancer. ECAC is, therefore, an instrumental tool to guide EU citizens to adapt their lifestyles to help prevent cancer. Additionally, governmental policies and actions are also needed to ensure comprehensive, evidence-based screening programmes for prevention and early detection of cancer.

All EU citizens should have equal and affordable access to innovative cancer medicines. This will require international collaboration, with all involved parties, working together constructively to ensure the prices of cancer medicines are affordable.

Finally, those living with cancer should be supported by every means possible, including protective and non-discriminative policies in the workplace, access to rehabilitation programmes and tailored palliative care programmes if and when necessary. World Cancer Day is an opportunity to remind us that collaboration is key in the fight against cancer and that to advance, we must do so together.

Cancer knows no borders, and collaborative research leading to innovative treatments and a better understanding of the disease is crucial in the fight against the disease. In order to beat cancer sooner, it is necessary to ensure that European policies and the EU's regulatory environment foster innovative research projects. Also, the EU must make room for adequate funding initiatives, such as Horizon 2020, to support researchers and scientific talent, as the sharing of equipment and facilities is important to support collaboration. There is a need for enabling legislation to protect the mobility and collaboration of academics, researchers and patients to participate in clinical trials or have their data and scientific findings shared efficiently and responsibly.

We support the work of all relevant professionals involved in cancer care, as well as the patient and care community, in order to find sustainable solutions to foster innovation within current, and future cancer care. Adopting a culture of innovation requires a multidisciplinary team approach – with the patient at the centre, and as an integral part of the team. It must take a whole-system and whole-patient perspective on cancer care, match unmet patient

needs and be guided by high quality real-world data that include patient-relevant outcomes accurately reflecting the impact of innovation in clinical practice.

On World Cancer Day, it is important to put an emphasis on children with cancer. We call on the EU to address the need to develop better and kinder treatments for children with cancer across the EU and improve access to these treatments. Paediatric tumours are still a threat for children and adolescents in Europe, with 6,000 dying every year, and over 300,000 European survivors still live with long-term treatment side effects^[3].

As members of the MEPS Against Cancer group, we engage to shape the future EU health and research policy towards a future where no one dies of cancer and survivors live to the fullest. We call on the European Union to strengthen its policies in the fight against cancer, as well as making full and appropriate use of the existing guidelines and initiatives shaping policy making and funding. Ahead of World Cancer Day on 4 February 2017, we call on the European Union to put cancer research at the heart of its health and scientific agendas for the benefit of cancer patients across Europe and the scientific community. Further, we call on the EU to boost its role as an important funder and enabler of research in Europe and beyond.

This statement is written in collaboration with, and supported by, European Cancer Leagues (ECL), Cancer Research UK (CRUK), the European Cancer Organisation (ECCO) and the European Society for Paediatric Oncology (SIOPE).

Social media and engaging: We encourage you to share this letter and show your support on social media on World Cancer Day using #ActOfUnity #WorldCancerDay and tagging @CRUK_policy, @EuropeanCancer; @SIOPEurope; @CancerLeagues and @MAC_MEPs



The MAC group is an all-party political group on cancer in the European Parliament. MAC members are from all political groups, and come from different EU member states. The MAC group was founded in 2005 and remains the only dedicated group to cancer policy in the European Parliament.

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Cancer_statistics

[2] <http://cancer-code-europe.iarc.fr/index.php/en/>

[3] 31 June 2016: G. Vassal, M. Schrappe, R. Ladenstein et al., The SIOPE strategic plan: A European cancer plan for children and adolescents, Journal of Cancer Policy, Volume 8, pp 17–32, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jcpo.2016.03.007>



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