

2019 ECL ANNUAL MEETINGS

European Cancer Leagues

support vital research to make beating cancer a mission possible



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Luxembourg - Members of the *Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)* and invited experts from 26 countries across the WHO European region gathered this week to discuss the achievements and future challenges of cancer research and prevention in Europe.

This year, ECL's annual conference and meetings were hosted by the [Fondation Cancer Luxembourg](#) as part of the celebration of its 25th anniversary of service to their community and patients.

Significant progress has been made in the last 50 years, transforming the prospects for people diagnosed with cancer. Research has led to an improved understanding of the biology and causes of cancer. This in turn has led to discovering better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat the disease - all helping to save lives. However, there is still a long way to go.

Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in Europe, and a growing and ageing population means incidence continues to rise at an alarming rate. The need for ground-breaking research is needed more than ever. Cancer Leagues believe that beating cancer is a mission possible and that the quality of cancer care available in Europe depends on the quality of cancer research taking place across the region and beyond.



The hosting organisation, Fondation Cancer Luxembourg, opened the meeting with a welcome speech from its President. Dr Carlo Bock, President of the Fondation Cancer Luxembourg, stated: *'Our proven track record of providing financial support for numerous research projects has earned the Fondation Cancer widespread recognition as a top leader in the fight against cancer. The Fondation Cancer has directly funded 12 studies in 2018-19 for a total of over 5.6 million € and provides ongoing support to national research actors as well as scientists abroad. As scientific advances accelerate, researchers are already laying the foundations for the next generation of cancer treatments that will save millions of lives'*.



Dr Sakari Karjalainen, President of the Association of European Cancer Leagues, added: *'Cancer knows no borders. That is why international collaboration is the backbone of research. If we are to turn the tide on cancer, our approach to research on innovative cancer prevention and treatment solutions needs to be increasingly robust. This means putting patients ahead of self-interest and cooperation ahead of competition. We need to continue to ensure that EU policies and the regulatory environment support collaboration across the cancer community and strengthen the role of its representative organisations, such as ECL. ECL is proud to bring together and support some of Europe's largest charitable research funders. Our members funded over €600 million of cancer research in 2017/18'*.

The 2019 ECL Conference put a spotlight on cancer prevention research, opportunities and challenges under the EU Mission on Cancer and the importance of cross-country collaboration.

The Conference was also opened by the European Commission, represented by Mr John F. Ryan, Director for Public Health, Country Knowledge & Crisis Management at the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE). In his speech, Mr Ryan applauded cancer leagues for their outstanding dedication to the fight against cancer: *'Significant progress has been made in improving the outcome for cancer patients, but we are not done yet. With EU funds, our world class researchers have led the way in pioneering discoveries that lead to better ways of treating and caring for cancer patients. The next EU Commission, through Horizon Europe's Mission on Cancer and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, has an opportunity to boost EU overall survival rates to be among the best in the world. To drive this ambition, it is necessary to prevent people from developing cancer and to preserve the EU's status as a world-leader in cancer research and control. We need to improve our prevention interventions and actively promote the exchange of best practices between Member States. Prevention must be the cornerstone of action. Member States should be supported to implement the recommendations of the European Code Against Cancer. To pursue these goals, having strong political backing and your support as civil society will be essential. With your help, there is a window of opportunity for Europe to fulfill its potential of becoming a global leader in the fight against cancer'*

Cancer leagues also addressed the important topic of survivorship. As the population living with cancer grows and the majority of medical R&I focuses on product development and market approval, collaboration is of utmost importance for research into patient issues.





Barbara Strehler, Head of Psycho-Oncology Department, Fondation Cancer Luxembourg, commented: 'We must ensure that people are not just surviving longer, but living well too. Cancer patients have complex and varied needs - with many of them living with serious health condition, often as a result of treatment. At the same time, many people experience emotional and financial consequences of their diagnosis, which have a negative impact for many years after treatment has ended'.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

ECL provides a unique platform as the only non-profit, pan-European umbrella organisation with the mission of uniting, at the European level, national and regional cancer leagues to achieve a cancer-free Europe. Active since 1980 and located in Brussels, ECL currently has 29 members from 24 countries in the European Region, covering 21 EU member states. ECL's members are cancer charities operating across the whole portfolio - from cancer research and awareness to patient support during and after diagnosis. Cancer leagues are often the main resource for the public for cancer control information and services. ECL's mission is to influence and improve cancer control and cancer care in Europe. This is done by providing a forum and voice for experienced charities and supporting new entrants facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing, primarily in the areas of cancer prevention, tobacco control, access to medicines and patient support, as well as creating opportunities to advocate for these issues at the EU level. ECL also collaborates with global and European institutions, other NGOs and research institutes. For further information about ECL, please visit their [website](#) and follow @CancerLeagues on   

About the Fondation Cancer Luxembourg

Founded in 1994 in Luxembourg, Fondation Cancer has been working tirelessly to improve cancer control for more than 25 years. The Fondation Cancer is a non-profit organisation that aims to reduce cancer mortality and morbidity rates by waging an encompassing fight - by promoting research, prevention and early detection, improved methods of treatment and rehabilitation and quality of life. To achieve this, the Fondation Cancer carries out numerous actions and publications, offers services and assistance to patients and their loved ones and financially supports relevant research projects. The Fondation Cancer also organises an annual Relay for Life solidarity event and strives to ensure patients' rights. The Fondation Cancer works closely with health authorities but is financially independent and relies on the generosity of its occasional and regular donors. For further information, visit their [website](#) and follow @FondationCancer

