



# STRATEGY

2019-2021

# ABOUT

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## EUROPEAN CANCER LEAGUES

The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) is a non-profit, European umbrella organisation of national and regional cancer societies. ECL provides an exclusive platform for members to collaborate with their international peers, primarily in the areas of cancer prevention, tobacco control, cancer research, access to medicines and patient support, and creates opportunities to advocate for these issues at the EU and national level.

European cancer leagues join their efforts to fight cancer. ECL currently has 26 member societies in 23 European countries (as of December 2018), representing more than 444 million citizens. Our members spend more than 850 million euros in total per annum to fight cancer, with a combined staff of over 2,550 people and more than 200,000 volunteers. Cancer leagues are primarily financed by donations from the general public and some also receive support from private businesses and governmental funds.

ECL represents cancer leagues in the context of EU policy and advocates for members' mutual priorities. ECL further provides administrative and knowledge support while offering a platform for an exchange of experiences and best practices between ECL member societies. ECL members work together primarily in the fields of cancer prevention (e.g., healthy lifestyles, skin protection and vaccinations HBV, HPV), tobacco control, access to medicines, quality of cancer care and support for cancer patients and survivors.

The General Assembly, consisting of delegates from each member organisation, is the supreme governing body of ECL. The General Assembly elects the Executive Board and decides upon future strategies and actions. The Executive Board proactively plans the strategy, priorities, goals and targets, and is responsible for implementing decisions taken at the General Assembly. It further sets up the annual work programme of the organisation and assumes its follow-up.

The ECL Secretariat is located in Brussels, Belgium. The office administers and coordinates ECL activities as defined by the Executive Board, in line with policies approved by the General Assembly. The ECL Secretariat provides the Secretariat for the Members of the European Parliament Against Cancer (MAC) group, including organizing and hosting meetings for MEPs. The Secretariat monitors EU action related to cancer and communicates findings, policies and advocacy opportunities to ECL members. The Secretariat brings together members working in specific fields (e.g., cancer prevention, access to medicines, cancer research and patient support) and works proactively to influence key EU decision-makers and cancer control policies to achieve the ECL strategy.

## **VISION** A Europe free of cancers

**MISSION** The Association of European Cancer Leagues advocates for improved cancer control and care in Europe through facilitating collaboration between cancer leagues, and influencing EU and European policies.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The burden of cancer in Europe continues to increase. The strain is tremendous and immeasurable on patients, families, and societies. Europe accounts for 23.4% of global cancer cases and 20.3% of cancer deaths, while only having 9% of the global population.[1] In 2018, 3.9 million new cancer cases (excluding non-melanoma skin) and 1.9 million cancer deaths were estimated in Europe. The most common were cancers of the female breast (523,000 cases), followed by colorectal (500,000), lung (470,000) and prostate cancer (450,000). These four cancers represent half of the overall cancer burden in Europe. The most common causes of death were cancers of the lung (388,000 deaths), colorectal (243,000), breast (138,000) and pancreatic cancer (128,000). In the EU-28, the estimated number of new cancer cases was approximately 1.6 million in males and 1.4 million in females, with 790,000 men and 620,000 women dying from the disease in the same year.[2]

[1] WHO IARC, 'Latest Global Cancer Data', September 2018. [http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2018/pdfs/pr263\\_E.pdf](http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2018/pdfs/pr263_E.pdf)

[2] Ferlay J. et al. Cancer incidence and mortality patterns in Europe: Estimates for 40 countries and 25 major cancers in 2018. *European Journal of Cancer*. 2018 Aug 9. doi: 10.1016/j.ejca.2018.07.005.

# ECL STRATEGIC GOALS 2019-2021

ECL will ensure that promotion of cancer research, addressing inequalities in Europe, access to high quality cancer treatment and care, and enhanced patient involvement in healthcare is regarded in all of ECL's activities and advocacy. ECL represents its member societies and is independent of external influence.



## **Goal 1** Influence cancer control policies

Maintain and strengthen ECL's position in influencing European cancer control policies. Work for and support the development and implementation of national cancer control programmes, this includes European collaboration, establishment and support to cancer registries, epidemiological, clinical and basic cancer research in all European countries.



## **Goal 2** Promote Cancer Prevention

Promote the evidence-based knowledge to prevent cancer, such as messages of the European Code Against Cancer in order to reduce cancer incidence and mortality in Europe. Advocate for the implementation of governmental policies and actions supporting messages of the European Code Against Cancer.



## **Goal 3** Enhance access to cancer screening and early diagnosis

Enhance access to scientifically proven effective and quality controlled cancer screening programmes in accordance with EU guidelines and relevant international evidence. Support early detection of cancer.

# ECL STRATEGIC GOALS 2019-2021



## **Goal 4** Ensure equal access to high value cancer treatments for all cancer patients in Europe

Advocate for equal access to effective cancer treatments and therapies for all European patients by insisting on accessibility, sustainability of the healthcare system and transparency of medicines prices.



## **Goal 5** Develop actions supporting cancer patients, survivors and caregivers

Improve support services and ensure access to high quality treatment interventions and care for all cancer patients, survivors and caregivers in Europe. Promote the rights and address inequalities throughout the whole patient pathway.



## **Goal 6** Grow membership and increase impact of ECL in Europe

Actively contribute to the growth of the organisations by promoting ECL's work in Europe. Boost the impact of ECL by strengthening its voice in cancer control advocacy. Ensure membership of relevant cancer societies in ECL.



## **Goal 1 Influence cancer control policies**

### **STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES**

- i. Represent the voice of national cancer societies, patients and general public in all advocacy activities we undertake.
- ii. Ensure ECL always plays a vital role in European cancer control and is perceived as a key stakeholder at the European institutions (e.g. European Parliament, European Commission, Consilium, European Medicines Agency, World Health Organization, EU Joint Actions etc.).
- iii. Monitor EU cancer control legislation and actions at the EU level taking into account the priorities of ECL members.
- iv. Network at European level and maintain relationships with policy-makers, especially through the MEPs Against Cancer (MAC) interest group, and relevant stakeholders including patient and health and cancer-focused organisations.
- v. Support national leagues in advocacy for the development, evaluation and improvement of national cancer control programmes.
- vi. Promote improvements of national cancer registration practice in Europe and advocate for standardisation of better quality patient outcomes data. Ensure use and sharing of data to improve cancer control, care and after-care.
- vii. Work toward a tobacco free Europe.
- viii. Promote activities to monitor funding of research and advocate for more EU resources for cancer research.



## **Goal 2 Promote Cancer Prevention**

### **STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES**

- i. Communicate and promote implementation of the European Code Against Cancer among member leagues and general population and across Europe.
- ii. Support ECL members' cancer prevention activities.
- iii. Promote exchange of information, best practices and campaign strategies among member leagues.
- iv. Support member leagues in collaborating with other European cancer organisations in cancer prevention activities.
- v. Advocate for the implementation of governmental policies and actions that are supportive of the messages of the European Code Against Cancer.



## **Goal 3 Enhance access to cancer screening and early diagnosis**

### **STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES**

- i. Monitor EU action on cancer screening and early detection and work with relevant European institutions.
- ii. Ensure ECL views are taken into account by the European Commission in the updating of screening guidelines and regular monitoring reports on the implementation of cancer screening programmes.
- iii. Advocate for implementation of evidence-based screening guidelines at the national level, primarily in countries where they do not exist.
- iv. Cooperate with organisations focusing on evidence-based screening of cancers.



## **Goal 4 Ensure equal access to high value cancer treatments for all cancer patients in Europe**

### **STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES**

- i. Ensure that key challenges in access to high value cancer treatments and therapies (both essential and innovative) and their solutions are on the political agenda at both European and national level.
- ii. Partner with like-minded organisations working toward universal access and work together toward reaching common objectives.
- iii. Continue an open dialogue with pharmaceutical and other industries over prices of cancer treatment and therapies, among other pressing topics, stressing the needs of patients and civil society.
- iv. For the ECL Access to Medicines Task Force:
  - a. Ensure that the ECL Access to Medicines Task Force plays a key stakeholder role at the EU institutions and maintains good relations with national and European decision-makers.
  - b. Push for increased transparency in pricing of medicines and advocate for fair and sustainable pricing model.
  - c. Address issues and advocate for solutions stated in the ECL Let's Talk Access White Paper (2018). Always respect the goals stated in the Task Force's Declaration of Intent (2016).
- v. Support patient empowerment and ensure patient voice is reflected in all activities related to access to cancer treatment and therapies



## **Goal 5** Develop actions supporting cancer patients, survivors and caregivers

### **STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES**

- i. Work together with members of the ECL Patient Support Working Group (PSWG) to identify key issues among ECL member leagues where PSWG is able to formulate baseline recommendations for use by the leagues, patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals, and for advocacy at the EU level.
- ii. Promote quality of life issues at the European level by raising awareness and ensuring the topic is high on the European and national political agenda.
- iii. Ensure improvement of cancer care services (throughout the patient pathway from diagnosis to rehabilitation and palliative care) in national states by learning from best practices shared in the PSWG.
- iv. Support patient empowerment and ensure patient voice is reflected in all activities the PSWG undertakes.
- v. Partner with patient, healthcare professional and other relevant organisations in areas of cancer care, patient and caregiver support and survivorship to increase the impact of PSWG's work.



## **Goal 6** Grow membership and increase impact of ECL in Europe

- i. Actively negotiate and work toward increased membership of European cancer societies in ECL.
- ii. Ensure strong impact of ECL on cancer control in Europe.