

# MEPs AGAINST CANCER MEETING

## EARLY DIAGNOSIS &

## CANCER OF UNKNOWN PRIMARY



26 June 2018, 16:00-18:00  
European Parliament, room ASP 3H1



Hosted by MEP Theresa Griffin (UK, S&D)  
Co-hosted by MEP Christel Schaldemose (DK, S&D)



Danish Cancer Society

CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK

16:00-16:10	<b>Welcome and Opening remarks</b> <i>Theresa Griffin, MEP</i> <i>Christel Schaldemose, MEP</i>
16:10-16:15	<b>About MEPs Against Cancer</b> <i>Wendy Yared, DrPH, ECL Director</i>
16:15-16:35	<b>Speakers' presentations</b> <b>Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP)</b> <i>John Symons, CUP Foundation</i>
16:35-17:55	<b>WHO Guide to Cancer Early Diagnosis</b> <i>Marilys Anne Corbex, PhD, World Health Organization</i>
16:55-17:15	<b>7 Signs to Detect Cancer</b> <i>Helene Holm-Burén, MSc, Danish Cancer Society</i>
17:15-17:30	<b>iPAAC Joint Action 2018-2021: WP5 Prevention &amp; Early Diagnosis</b> <i>Satu Lipponen, Cancer Society of Finland</i>
17:30-17:55	<b>Open debate and Q&amp;A</b>
17:55-18:00	<b>Wrap up and Outlook</b> <i>Theresa Griffin, MEP</i>



Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
**Socialists & Democrats**  
in the European Parliament

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## KEY MESSAGES

- With better diagnosis and improved management cancer of unknown primary (CUP) incidence and mortality rates over last 20 years have been considerably falling. Nevertheless, mortality rates are still high (5<sup>th</sup> highest cause of cancer death in the UK) and high percentage of patients diagnosed with CUP are presented as emergencies (57% in the UK).
- CUP patients undergo on average 19 medical investigations and face more psychological problems because of uncertainty and difficulties to explain the diagnosis.
- CUP research and diagnostic expertise have improved significantly however there are still further research and clinical trials needed to improve patients' survival and quality of life.
- Most clinicians have limited experience with CUP and often have difficulties to communicate the diagnosis. Involvement in the EU wide collaborative networks would be an opportunity to exchange expertise and experience with other healthcare professionals. Involving CUP in the EU joint actions would be a way how to put issues specific to CUP on the political agenda.
- There are various causes of delay for early detection, however lack of data about stage distribution in the EU makes it complicated to detect whether survival is thanks to early diagnosis or cancer treatment.
- Awareness campaigns can be an effective tool to educate general public but it is important to ensure that health system can provide efficient early cancer detection system.

## INTRODUCTION

The host **MEP Theresa Griffin** opened the meeting by welcoming speakers and other participants at the European Parliament.

*"It is good that we are now having this discussion about Cancer of Unknown Primary - it is vital that we take steps to improve the situation across the EU for this under-discussed form of cancer. As someone who has lost a close relative to this cancer, I know that more needs to be done to support families going through this diagnosis, to put in place structures which will result in the earlier detection of this cancer, and to research and develop new and innovative treatments."*

Introduction was followed by **Dr. Wendy Yared**, Director of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL), presenting the work and upcoming meetings of the MEPs Against Cancer group.

## “Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP)” | **JOHN SYMONS**, CUP Foundation

John Symons gave an introduction about CUP and issues specific to this type of cancer and CUP patients. Mr Symons looked into developments of CUP research and the opportunities offered by the molecular revolution for improving the situation for this often neglected patient group.

*“CUP is recognised in most studies around the world as being one of the 10 most common cancers yet few people have heard of it. Historically, life expectancy for the majority of CUP patients can be measured in months; but there are encouraging developments that suggest an improving outlook.”*

## “WHO Guide to Cancer Early Diagnosis” | PhD **MARILYS ANNE CORBEX**, WHO

*“In the EU, the vast majority of cancer (more than 75%) are detected due to symptoms rather than screening, even in countries where screening programs are perfectly developed. Rapid diagnosis of symptomatic cancer patients is of primary importance to improve survival, but symptoms often remain overlooked. We tend to put the blame on patients who should have come earlier but in most cases it is the health system which is to blame for such delays.”*

Marilys Corbex introduced WHO guide on cancer early diagnosis and stressed the importance of understanding and reducing delays at certain stages during cancer detection. Dr Corbex viewed benefits and harms of cancer screening and contested that focusing early detection on cancer screening might not be the most efficient option in all cases.

## “7 Signs to Detect Cancer” | MSc **HELENE HOLM-BURÉN**, Danish Cancer Society

Helene Holm-Burén presented Danish Cancer Society’s cancer symptom awareness campaign. “7 signs to detect cancer” campaign was spread through social media, TV and press and aimed to improve general cancer survival in Denmark. Campaign has proven to be effective with up to 75% Danes aged 50-75 recognising the key campaign message “If experiencing any of the 7 signs, see a doctor” and 3-7% visiting their GP after seeing the campaign.

## “iPAAC Joint Action 2018-2021: WP5 Prevention & Early Diagnosis” | **SATU LIPPONEN**, Cancer Society of Finland

Satu Lipponen from Cancer Society of Finland and the package leader of the iPAAC Joint Action on Cancer Control presented the iPAAC Joint Action. The key focus of this Joint Action will be on implementation, reflected in the key deliverable: the Roadmap on Implementation and Sustainability of Cancer Control Actions. Ms Satu Lipponen focused her presentation on the Work Package 5 on Prevention and Early Diagnosis and introduced its specific objectives and tasks.

The meeting concluded with a round-table discussion with speakers and stakeholders. **MEP Christel Schaldemose** concluded the meeting stating:

*“The most important we can do is detecting any kind of cancer on an early stage. But it might be even more important when it comes to cancer of unknown primary, since even people doing a self-detection might not be aware of the symptoms that is significant for CUP. This has been a good discussion about a cancer disease that many do not know much or even anything about, and I hope this discussion will be able to put a greater focus on CUP and cancer in general.”*