

Third MEPs Against Cancer (MAC) Interest Group Internal Strategy Meeting 2022

Welcome and introduction by MAC Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Prof. Véronique Trillet-Lenoir opened the session, applauding all the efforts carried out by the Members of the European Parliament this year in terms of cancer control policies, but also regarding health overall. Unfortunately, Prof. Trillet-Lenoir had to leave the meeting due to other commitments, but she commended the MAC Secretariat on the MAC Action Plan 2022.

MEP Loucas Fourlas also welcomed the MAC group, expressing his delight to see that the MAC group had remained active since 2019 and to have participated in several MAC stakeholders and associated events in 2021. MEP Fourlas seized the opportunity of this meeting to congratulate Prof. Trillet-Lenoir on her work on the BECA report. MEP Fourlas stressed that in 2022, the MAC group should focus on providing concrete results and outputs for patients, as well as addressing the inequalities in prevention and care across Europe.

Dr Sara Cerdas then took the floor to welcome the participants. She emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over and that we should take this into account when working on policy files and initiatives. In this regard, Dr Cerdas highlighted that the aspect of timely access to early diagnosis and ensuring that people do not delay their appointments will become essential in the coming years.

MEP Tilly Metz expressed her considerations towards the ambitious MAC Action Plan proposed for 2022. She suggested that MAC should focus on access to early diagnosis, better pricing models, and better sharing and using of data. MEP Tilly Metz also emphasised the importance of addressing inequalities and focusing attention on marginalised populations.

Opening remarks by Prof. Rui Medeiros, President of ECL

Prof. Rui Medeiros welcomed the Members of the European Parliament who attended the meeting, thanking them for the time and enthusiasm they dedicate to cancer patients. Prof. Rui Medeiros recalled that the MEPs Against Cancer Interest Group was created in 2005 by a group of committed MEPs. Today, the MAC group remains the oldest and largest dedicated group for cancer policy at the European Parliament.

ECL, which represents 30 cancer leagues and societies from 25 countries across the WHO/Europe Region and more than 500 million citizens, is honoured to provide secretariat support to such a diverse group, which today represents 123 members coming from different political groups.

Prof. Rui Medeiros underlined the dedication and intensive work the MEPs have produced on the BECA report. The attention given to cancer policies demonstrates the strong and continuous commitment the European Parliament has taken regarding improving cancer care, from cancer research to survivorship.

Rui Medeiros then introduced the ECL team, who joined the warmly welcome addressed by their President:

- Dr. Wendy Yared, Director of ECL
- Ms Linda Abdelall, Policy & Projects Officer and Coordinator of the MAC group
- Ms Ginevra Papi, Communications & Public Relations Officer
- Ms Flore Rennesson, Policy & Projects Assistant

MAC 2021 Highlights

As a Secretariat, ECL's missions include MEPs visibility, individual support, and networking with civil society organisations. The Secretariat connects MAC members with oncology experts, with national and regional cancer leagues; provides policy recommendations and suggests events where MAC members can speak, moderate, or chair.

Linda Abdelall, Coordinator of the group, then presented the 2021 MAC stakeholders' event which aim at launching a dynamic dialogue between all the stakeholders. In 2021, MAC MEPs participated in three stakeholders' events:

- Joint Policy Dialogue on [Cervical Cancer Elimination](#) (5 February);
- Joint Policy Dialogue on the [Tobacco Products Directive](#) (29 June);
- **Joint Webinar on European Cross-border Initiatives and Fair Medicine Deals (9 December) – To attend the event, please register here:**
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aY1kO1LjTL6PCTN1jtAi1w

The Secretariat also organised and promoted associated events:

- [Tackling Challenges in Cancer Care & improving its Governance in the EU: Recommendations from the iPAAC Joint Action](#) (15 March);
- [The General Data Protection Regulation & its impact on clinical research](#) (21 May);
- [The Towards a Transformational change for Children and Adolescents with Cancer in Europe: Synergies between Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and EU Cancer Research Programmes](#) (30 September).

Regarding communications, Ginevra Papi, Communications and Public Relations Officer, underlined that the MAC Secretariat strives to ensure to give the MAC members visibility. In 2021, the MAC group launched two social media campaigns, on [World Cancer Day](#) (4 February) and for the [European Week Against Cancer](#) (25 – 31 May).

In 2021, ECL also provided the MEPs with Policy Papers and Resources on a wide range of topics, including:

- [ECL's reflections on medicine shortages;](#)
- [ECL's contribution to the EP own-initiative report on the Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe;](#)

- [Proposed Joint Amendments on the Proposed regulation on a reinforced role for the European Medicines Agency in crisis preparedness and management for medicinal products and medical devices;](#)
- Joint Statement with the European Society of Skin Cancer Prevention (EUROSKIN) and the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) on the [adverse health effects associated with sunbed use;](#)
- Joint recommendations with the European Heart Network (EHN), the European Lung Foundation (ELF) and the Smoke-Free Partnership (SFP) on [creating a Tobacco-Free Europe;](#)
- [Cancer Leagues' recommendations for the implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan .](#)

MAC Action Plan 2022

Then, the MAC Secretariat described the suggested Action Plan for 2022.

In 2022, the MAC group will carry out two **online campaigns**:

- **World Cancer Day** (4 February), to celebrate one year since the launch of the #EUCancerPlan. This year, the new World Cancer Day theme “Close the Care Gap”, aiming to highlight the disparities in cancer care across the world. You will be asked to (i) answer two questions for us to prepare custom-made social media quote cards, and (ii) Post your pledge/commitment alongside a picture of yourself wearing a MAC pin, scarf or tie, or holding the MAC notepad;
- **European Week Against Cancer – EWAC** (25 to 31 May), to assess the progress made on the implementation of the #EUCancerPlan and engage with national stakeholders & governments. MEPs MAC will be invited to engage in short interviews or prepare a short video message answering one or two questions to post on the official [MAC Twitter account](#) and [MAC Facebook account](#).

For both campaigns, a toolkit with instructions to follow will be sent to the MAC group in due course.

Then, Linda Abdelall presented the proposed events for 2022:

- **Let's deliver Europe's Beating Cancer Plan** (February 2022 TBC): this event would constitute an opportunity to reflect on the Commission's Implementation Roadmap of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the BECA Committee's report;
- **Let's talk about quality in early detection** (May 2022 TBC): this event would lead the MAC group to reflect on the flagship initiatives and supporting actions related to early detection within the EBCP and to discuss WHO's guidelines, recommendations & relevant conclusions from the Innovative Partnership for Action on Cancer (iPAAC) Joint Action;
- **European Health Data Space: everything patients always wanted to know but were afraid to ask** (November 2022 TBC): this timely event would represent an occasion to discuss the impact of the European Health Data Space on patients' and healthcare professionals' daily life, as well as discuss

challenges and opportunities of the new framework outlined in the upcoming Commission's communication.

On the latter, MEP Metz expressed her enthusiasm for working with the MAC group on this file to get an overview of the impacts, challenges, risks, and benefits for patients.

The MAC Secretariat was delighted to hear about MEP Metz's interest and added that it was important that our approach remained indeed centred on patients and concrete impacts.

Linda Abdelall introduced the proposed associated events for 2022 in the following areas:

- **EU Tobacco Tax Directive (2011/64/EU)**, foreseen in May 2022 (TBC);
- **Childhood cancer for Gold September**, foreseen on 28 or 29 September 2022;
- **Cervical cancer elimination in the EU guidelines on screening**, date TBC.

Linda Abdelall reaffirmed that the MAC group aims to partner with relevant civil society organisations (the European Society for Paediatric Oncology Europe (SIOP Europe) when addressing childhood cancer for instance). She also emphasised that these events present a comprehensive and inclusive approach, including real policy outcomes to be shared with the institutions and stakeholders.

MEP Tilly Metz asked whether cervical cancer would be addressed only through the lens of vaccination. Although ECL strongly campaigns to increase vaccination for HPV to eliminate this type of cancer, this event would tackle WHO's global strategy and guidelines, which encompass much more than the vaccination, in terms of access to treatments, rehabilitation and inequalities.

MEP Tilly Metz also suggested linking the event related to childhood cancer to the revision of the paediatric regulation expected by the end of the year. In this regard, Linda Abdelall flagged that in May 2021 ECL organised with SIOP Europe, the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), and the European Fair Pricing Network (EFPN) a policy dialogue on the revision of the 2000 Orphan Regulation and the 2006 Paediatric Regulation. That event concluded with [joint recommendations](#) for improving the two legislative documents.

Finally, Linda Abdelall outlined ECL's plan to further connect MAC MEPs with their national cancer leagues and societies. The MAC Secretariat can facilitate meetings between the cancer leagues and the MAC members, to discuss, for instance, the national implementation of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

Closing remarks

Linda Abdelall concluded the meeting by thanking all the MAC members for their extensive work and their commitment to date. She stressed that the MAC members can contact the MAC Secretariat at any point in time, should they have any comments, doubts, or feedback.

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 30 members from 25 countries in the European Region, covering 20 EU member states. ECL's members are cancer charities operating across the whole cancer continuum - from cancer research and awareness to patient support during and after diagnosis. ECL has been providing the Secretariat for the [MEPs Against Cancer \(MAC\) Interest Group](#) at the European Parliament since 2010.

Contacts:

- Linda Abdelall (ECL's Policy & Projects Officer)
linda@europeancancerleagues.org
- Ginevra Papi (ECL's Communications Officer)
gina@europeancancerleagues.org
- Website & Social Media
 - www.cancer.eu | [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#)
 - <http://www.mepsagainstcancer.eu/> | [Twitter](#) & [Facebook](#)