

YOUTH ADVOCATES RAISE THEIR VOICES ON HPV INFECTION

PREVENTION IS IMPERATIVE IF WE ARE TO ELIMINATE CERVICAL CANCER

Brussels, Belgium & Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina – On the occasion of the [Cervical Cancer Elimination Day of Action](#), the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) Youth Ambassadors for the European Code against Cancer representing Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), in cooperation with the Association of Oncologists in BiH, are proud to **launch a new video campaign raising awareness about the need to prevent HPV infection.**

Globally, **cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer** and the third leading cause of cancer deaths in women. About 500,000 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed worldwide each year, and nearly 300,000 women die from this malignant disease.

It is estimated that on a global level one woman dies from cervical cancer every two minutes, whilst in BiH one woman loses her battle with this preventable disease every three days. **However, BiH has yet to adopt a national HPV vaccination programme.**

With this video campaign, women from different spheres of life in BiH talk candidly about the importance of preventing HPV infection, which is the necessary cause of cervical cancer.



David Ritchie

“With this video, we want to draw attention to the preventable nature of cervical cancer and other cancers caused by HPV infection. Women in BiH and across the globe deserve access to affordable and effective prevention programmes. Yet, an HPV vaccination programme has not yet been introduced in my country and many others in Europe and beyond. On this special day to commemorate the global strategy to eliminate cervical cancer, we are calling for progress to be made to bring this essential preventative measure to all.”

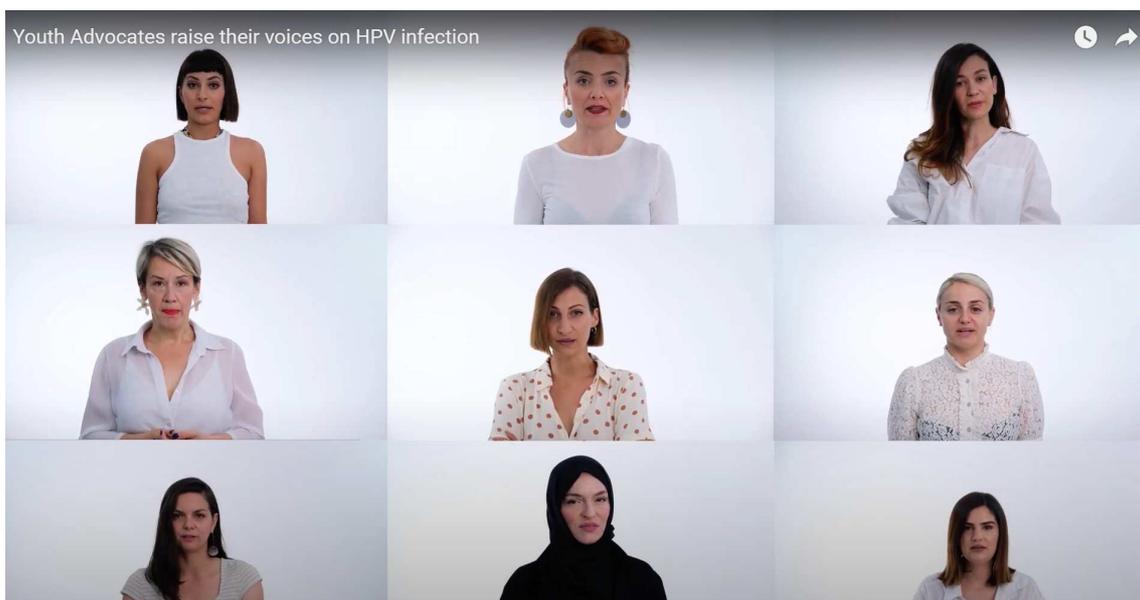
David Ritchie (**Cancer Prevention Manager, Association of European Cancer Leagues**).

Today marks one year since the World Health Organization adopted the [Global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem](#). The Strategy calls for the introduction of national HPV vaccination programmes and intensified implementation to reach **90%** coverage of girls fully vaccinated by the age of 15 years; for **70%** of women screened with a high precision test by 35 and 45 years of age; and **90%** of women identified with cervical disease receive treatment and care.

The European Union has also committed to take action to defeat cervical cancer. Adopted in February 2021, [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#) (EBCP) sets clear goals to reduce cancer caused by the human papilloma virus by vaccinating **at least 90%** of the target population of girls and significantly increase the number of vaccinated boys in the Union by 2030.

The EBCP can serve as inspiration for countries in Europe but outside of the EU, encouraging them to take bold steps to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem. According to the WHO, **82 countries have yet to introduce a national vaccination plan against HPV** and, sadly, **BiH is one of the 14 WHO Europe member state countries without a full HPV vaccination programme**.

On this special day, where we reflect on beating cervical cancer sooner, the Youth Ambassadors for the European Code against Cancer join ECL to **call for the introduction of the HPV vaccination in BiH without delay**.



NOTES FOR EDITORS

ABOUT THE VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/Hj5SKbQx19U>

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN CANCER LEAGUES (ECL)

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

ABOUT THE ECL YOUTH AMBASSADORS FOR THE EUROPEAN CODE AGAINST CANCER (ECAC)

[ECL Youth Ambassadors for the ECAC](#) are highly motivated students and young professionals drawn from over 35 different countries across the WHO European region and from many disciplines (including medicine, public health, law, and political sciences). They all share a deep conviction that cancer can be defeated by following the 12 messages of the European Code against Cancer. Through different events and initiatives, Youth Ambassadors make creative and enterprising actions to promote cancer prevention. The Youth Ambassadors for the ECAC group receives secretarial support from ECL.

ABOUT THE UDRUŽENJE ONKOLOGA BiH

The [Association of Oncologists BiH](#) consists of medical oncologists, specialists and specialists in internal medicine and other disciplines (surgeons, pathologists, radiologists, etc.), as well as general practitioners who are focused on the oncology patient in their daily work. It is based in Sarajevo and was founded in 2006.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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