



On Equality  
in Beating  
Cancer

# Closing Cancer Treatment Gaps in Europe

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# Cancer Inequality across the Union

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- In 2020, it is estimated that 2.7 million people in the European Union were diagnosed with the disease, and another 1.3 million people lost their lives to it.
- At the incidence rates prevailing nowadays in the European Union, it would be expected that 1 in 3 men and 1 in 4 women would be directly affected by cancer in the first 75 years of life.
- Europe is currently characterized by worrying inequalities in cancer control and care, existing within, as well as between, Member States.
- Cancer survivors should not have to face double the challenges and be discriminate against compared to other consumers, as they are facing unequal financial burdens. Cancer survivors have **the right to be forgotten** and insurers and banks should not take into account the medical history of people who have been affected by cancer.

# Cancer Inequality across the Union

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Major differences in cancer prevention and care between and within Member States are showed by several indicators, like:

- **access to prevention programs**
- **rates of early cancer detection, diagnosis, treatment, survival**
- **measures to improve quality of life of cancer patients and survivors**

For example, the risk of dying from cervical cancer is **five times higher** in the worst performing Member State than in the best. **These inequalities are unacceptable in a European Health Union that seeks to protect everyone.**

- *The Commission has proposed to establish a **Cancer Inequality Registry** which will identify trends, disparities and inequalities between Member States and regions*

# EU's Beating Cancer Plan to Tackle Inequality

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- Breast cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer and lung cancer represent half of the estimated overall burden of cancer in Europe.
  - *The EU Beating Cancer plan aims at implementing **quality assurance schemes and accreditation (Certified European Cancer Centers)** for screening and treatment of breast, colorectal and cervical cancer*
  - *The EU Network of Comprehensive Cancer Centers will support Member States in establishing **at least one National Comprehensive Cancer Centre by 2025***
- Rare cancers represent 24% of all cancer and all pediatric cancer are considered rare cancers.
  - *Extension of **joint procurement procedures for rare, pediatric and novel cancer medicines and treatments**, diagnostic procedures, companion diagnostic tests, and cancer-preventing vaccines like the HPV and hepatitis B vaccines.*

# Facilitating access to cross-border healthcare and clinical trials

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- The EU beating cancer plan aims to reduce healthcare disparities across different Member States or regions, but this will take time.
- Unfortunately, time is not forgiving for cancer patients who need treatment immediately.
  - *The E.P. report emphasizes the need for better implementation of, and an improved financial model for, the **Cross-border Healthcare Directive** in order to allow for mobility and access to highly specialized equipment and care through the **reinforcement of the National Contact Points (NCPs)** by providing them with more budgetary resources and calls for an increase in the number of **information campaigns on patients' rights to cross-border healthcare.***
  - *We need **facilitate the processes for patients who travel abroad for clinical trials** and face issues such as a lack of clarity on follow-up protocols after their return home and on coverage of costs related to their clinical trial participation by national insurance agencies*



# Healthcare assistance to refugees from Ukraine

<https://www.cancer.org/about-us/what-we-do/ukraine-support.html>

- More than 179,000 newly diagnosed patients with cancer are among the Ukrainian people suffering from Russia's unprovoked aggression. Disruptions to cancer treatment pose a grave risk to their very survival.
- We have asked the European Council and the European Commission to:
  - ***Urgently create a system of assistance for refugees from Ukraine suffering from cancer through the allocation of a concrete pool of places in hospitals in each Member State as well as provide all refugees with access to free medical care in the European Union.***
  - ***Create a special medical fund dedicated to medical care for refugees from Ukraine that would help the most involved Member States hosting refugees to maintain a fluency in the provision of healthcare to all refugees***
  - ***Adopt regulations that would enable refugees access to reimbursed medicines in Member States.***



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Cancer can be beaten!