



On Equality
in Beating
Cancer

Closing Cancer Treatment Gaps in Europe

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Cancer Inequality across the Union

- 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

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

- 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

- 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!