



Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: A new EU approach to prevention, treatment and care

Brussels, 3 February 2021

Today, on the eve of the World Cancer Day, the European Commission is presenting [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#) – a main priority in the area of health of the **von der Leyen** Commission and a key pillar of a strong [European Health Union](#). With new technologies, research and innovation as the starting point, the Cancer Plan sets out a new EU approach to cancer prevention, treatment and care. It will tackle the entire disease pathway, from prevention to quality of life of cancer patients and survivors, focusing on actions where the EU can add the most value.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan will be supported by actions spanning across policy areas from employment, education, social policy and equality, through marketing, agriculture, energy, the environment and climate, to transport, cohesion policy, and taxation.

Four key action areas

The Cancer Plan is structured around four key action areas with [10 flagship initiatives and multiple supporting actions](#). It will be implemented using the whole range of Commission funding instruments, with a total of **€4 billion** being earmarked for actions addressing cancer, including from the EU4Health programme, Horizon Europe and the Digital Europe programme.

- **Prevention** through actions addressing key risk factors such as tobacco (with the aim to ensure that less than 5% of the population uses tobacco by 2040), harmful alcohol consumption, environmental pollution and hazardous substances. Additionally, a 'HealthyLifestyle4All' campaign will promote healthy diets and physical activity. To prevent cancers caused by infections, the Cancer Plan's objective is to vaccinate at least 90% of the EU target population of girls and to significantly increase the vaccination of boys by 2030.
- **Early detection** of cancer by improving access, quality and diagnostics and support Member States ensuring that 90% of the EU population who qualify for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings are offered screening by 2025. To support achieving this, a new EU-supported Cancer Screening Scheme will be put forward.
- **Diagnosis and treatment** through actions to ensure better integrated and comprehensive cancer care and addressing unequal access to quality care and medicines. By 2030, 90% of eligible patients should have access to National Comprehensive Cancer Centres linked through a new EU Network. In addition, a new 'Cancer Diagnostic and Treatment for All' initiative will be launched by the end of 2021 to help improve access to innovative cancer diagnosis and treatments and a European Initiative to Understand Cancer (UNCAN.eu) will help identify individuals at high risk from common cancers.
- **Improve quality of life** of cancer patients and survivors, including rehabilitation, potential tumour recurrence, metastatic disease, and measures to support social integration and re-integration in the workplace. A 'Better Life for Cancer Patients Initiative' will be launched, focusing on follow-up care.

In addition, to support new technologies, research and innovation, a new **Knowledge Centre on Cancer** will be launched to help coordinate scientific and technical cancer-related initiatives at EU level. A **European Cancer Imaging Initiative** will be set up to support the development of new computer-aided tools to improve personalised medicine and innovative solutions.

A particular focus will be paid to children, through the launch of the '**Helping Children with Cancer Initiative**' to ensure that children have access to rapid and optimal detection, diagnosis, treatment and care. Finally, to identify trends, disparities and inequalities between Member States and regions, a **Cancer Inequalities Registry** will be established in 2021.

Members of the College said:

Ursula **von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission, said: "In 2020, while we were all fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us were fighting a silent battle. The battle against

cancer. In 2020, we lost 1.3 million Europeans to this disease. And sadly, the number of cases is on the rise. This is why we present Europe's Beating Cancer Plan today. The fight of those battling cancer is our fight as well, in Europe."

Margaritis **Schinass**, Vice-President of the European Commission, said: "Honouring one of this Commission's central pledges, we present today an anthropocentric Plan for cancer that addresses all angles: prevention, diagnosis, treatment and survivorship. This Plan is unique because it is based on a 'health in all policies' approach, pooling all strings together under a common goal, beating cancer. It is about health but beyond health policy. A whole-of-society effort. In a strong European Health Union, cancer becomes a shared political, operational and scientific priority."

Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: "This is first and foremost about people. About celebrating and reinforcing resilience and treating cancer as a disease that can and must be overcome. A strong European Health Union is a Union where citizens are protected from avoidable cancers, where they have access to early screening and diagnosis, and where everyone is empowered with access to high quality care, at every step of the way. This is what we want to achieve with our Cancer Plan – making concrete impact for cancer care over the coming years. For me this is not just a political commitment, it is a personal commitment."

Background

In 2020, 2.7 million people in the European Union were diagnosed with the disease, and another 1.3 million people lost their lives to it.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is a key pillar of the [European Health Union](#), presented by President **von der Leyen** in November 2020, calling for a more secure, resilient and better-prepared European Union.

The EU has been working on cancer for decades. Its actions, particularly on tobacco control (the Commission [published today](#) a new survey on attitudes of Europeans towards tobacco and electronic cigarettes) and protection from hazardous substances, have saved and extended many lives. However, the last comprehensive European action plan against cancer dates from the early 1990's and cancer treatment has seen major progress since then, notably via support to research and development (R&D) financed by the EU budget.

In addition to severely affecting the lives of patients and those around them, cancer has a huge impact on our health systems, our economy, and on the society at large. The overall economic impact of cancer in Europe is estimated to exceed €100 billion annually.

Without conclusive action, by 2035 cancer cases are estimated to increase by almost 25%, making it the leading cause of death in the EU. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe effect on cancer care, disrupting treatment, delaying diagnosis and vaccination, and affecting access to medicines.

For More Information

[Communication on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#)

[Annex to the Communication on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#)

[MEMO](#)

[Factsheet](#)

[Cancer Plan webpage](#)

[Eurobarometer on tobacco](#)

[EU policy on cancer](#)

[EU Coronavirus response](#)

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