



# EU's actions in cancer prevention and treatment

Sirpa Pietikäinen, 17 September 2022

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# Cancer is more and more prominent

- ▶ Every year in the EU, about 3,5 million people are diagnosed with cancer and 1,3 million people die from cancer. More than 40 % of cancer cases are preventable.
- ▶ The number of cancer cases increases strongly as the population ages. Without decisive action, lives lost to cancer in the EU are set to increase by more than 24 % by 2035, making it the leading cause of death in the EU
- ▶ Right now cancer is the second biggest cause of death in the EU
- ▶ The increase in the number of cases means that cancer takes up an increasingly larger share of healthcare resources
- ▶ At the same time, cancers with a poor prognosis are becoming rarer and an increasing share of cancers can be cured
- ▶ The life expectancy of patients with incurable cancer is also increasing as treatments develop



Sinpon

# EU4Health

- ▶ The size of the programme is 5.1 billion euros in the current multiannual financial framework of the EU
- ▶ Improves the EU's readiness to react to serious cross-border health threats such as COVID-19, by creating reserves of medical supplies for crisis situations and strengthening cross-border cooperation, for example with the help of European competence networks
- ▶ Support for health promotion and disease prevention
- ▶ Aims to increase the use of digital tools and services in healthcare, e.g. promoting the establishment of the European health data space
- ▶ Supports global health initiatives of international organizations, especially the World Health Organization (WHO)
- ▶ Implements the European Health Union by investing in cancer treatment, improving pandemic preparedness and access to medicines and increasing investments
- ▶ The Commission will enhance and expand the work related to the urgent priorities of the health sector. This means promoting initiatives: European competence networks for rare diseases, fighting cancer, reducing antimicrobial-resistant infections and encouraging international cooperation on global health threats and challenges



A large, stylized green signature, possibly reading 'Simpson' or similar, written in a cursive script.

# Cancer actions in the European Parliament

## ► Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA)

- was founded in the autumn of 2020 and finalised its work in the spring 2022
- the committee's goal was to evaluate and enhance actions in all key stages of the disease: prevention, diagnosis, treatment, the life of a cancer survivor and palliative treatment in a way to ensure close connections with the cancer research of the future Horizon Europe program
- Information about the committee's past hearings and its final report can be found on the committee's website:

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/beca/home/highlights>

## ► MEPs Against Cancer

- organises events and campaigns in the Parliament and elsewhere in Brussels
- actively influenced for example the EU4Health programme and the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan
- Website: <https://www.cancer.eu/meps-against-cancer-about-meps-against-cancer-2/>



*Simpson*



# BECA Committee's recommendations

- ▶ BECA committee drafted its final report in the spring of 2022
- ▶ The complete report: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2022-0001\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2022-0001_EN.html)
- ▶ BECA report's main points concerned, among others:
  - ▶ patient-centred approach to cancer care
  - ▶ screenings
  - ▶ long-term cancer care
  - ▶ support systems to patients and their close ones
  - ▶ rare cancers and their treatment
  - ▶ research and funding
  - ▶ vaccinations (papillomavirus)



*Sinpon*

# My priorities in cancer

1. **Prevention.** One planet, one health thinking, which is also included in the EU4Health program. The environment affects our health: air quality, working conditions, depletion of nature. The role of lifestyles.
2. **Early diagnosis and screenings.** All key types of cancer where screening is beneficial should have national screening programs, and it should be mandatory at the EU level.
3. **Quick access to treatment.** Europe-wide reference centres to support treatment
4. **Research and research funding.** Drug research, innovation and funding, use of personalized medicine
5. **Monitoring and rehabilitation.**
6. **Psychosocial support.** Different forms of support are needed in different cancers and this should be taken into account
7. **Development of the European Cancer Database.** Artificial intelligence, eHealth and other new technologies.
8. **European Reference Networks.**
9. **Rights of people with cancer.** Rights in working life, enabling sick leave and part-time work, developing work-life sensitivity and social security
10. **Right to be forgotten.** A bigger problem elsewhere in Europe than in the Nordics, difficulties obtaining insurances for example



# Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

- ▶ was published on 3 February 2021
- ▶ The plan in its entirety can be found here:  
[https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/eu\\_cancer-plan\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/eu_cancer-plan_en_0.pdf)
- ▶ aims to reduce the burden of cancer on patients, their families and healthcare systems
- ▶ addresses cancer-related inequality between and within EU Member States and proposes actions to support, coordinate and complete Member States' actions
- ▶ the focus is on breast, cervical and colorectal cancers
- ▶ the 4 pillars of the Plan are:
  - ▶ prevention
  - ▶ early detection
  - ▶ diagnosis and treatment
  - ▶ the improvement of quality of life of patients and survivors



Sinpea

# Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

- ▶ Contains 10 flagship initiatives and actions that are:
  - ▶ Knowledge Center on Cancer
  - ▶ European Cancer Imaging Initiative
  - ▶ papillomavirus vaccinations
  - ▶ EU Cancer Screening Scheme
  - ▶ EU Network linking recognised National Comprehensive Cancer Centres
  - ▶ Cancer Diagnostic and Treatment for All initiative
  - ▶ European Initiative to Understand Cancer (UNCAN.eu)
  - ▶ Better life for cancer patients initiative
  - ▶ Cancer Inequalities Registry
  - ▶ Helping Children with Cancer Initiative



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# Breast cancer

- ▶ Europe's Beating Cancer Plan aims to update the existing guidelines on breast cancer, including accreditation and certification programmes, and to develop a new EU Cancer Screening Scheme to ensure that by 2025, 90% of the target population is offered breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening
- ▶ Breast cancer screenings are highlighted as a good example of cancer screenings
- ▶ **European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer** includes European guidelines on breast cancer screening and diagnosis, a collection of international guidelines on breast cancer care and a European quality assurance scheme for breast cancer services
  - ▶ these guidelines and materials are continuously updated
  - ▶ Website: <https://healthcare-quality.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ecibc>
- ▶ Prostate cancer is more obscured in the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan
  - ▶ does mention a possibility to extend screenings to prostate cancer (also in the BECA committee's report)



*Sinpa*

# Thank you!

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