

Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on “Turning the tide on cancer: the view of national parliaments on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan”

Monday 27 September 2021, 9:00 - 12:00

- A real **tsunami of cancer is sweeping through Europe** and the world. We are the witnesses of steadily increasing number of cancer cases. With this in mind, we must start acting now. There is no time to lose. We must jointly work on improving diagnosis, therapy, treatment and prevention.
- That is why **we make it clear in opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: a concrete action scenario is required to implement the Plan**. It must be accompanied by specific performance indicators and clear timelines.
- As we emphasized in the opinion, the current plan is still too general. The **European Union must begin to set for itself even more ambitious and specific goals** in the fight against cancer.
- One of the toughest challenges is to **level the disproportions in the access to cancer treatment** between individual countries. For some types of cancer, the survival rate differences are really dramatic.
- Therefore, **we need to expand the ability of cancer patients to benefit from high-quality treatment provided by other Member States**.
- Support is also needed for research of innovative methods to fight against cancer. The addressee of this support should not only be

state institutions, but also enterprises of various sizes, and the scientists.

- We must also assist and contribute in the development of international cooperation - exchange of knowledge and know-how, experience, promotion of good practices - both within the EU, as well as, for example, with the United States or Canada, where 5-year survival rates are the best. There are loads of things to do and to work on in this field.
- Ladies and gentleman! All European Union citizens, no matter where they reside, deserve that cancer diagnosis does not mean a death sentence to them. **We need a real Marshall Plan in the field of oncology!** The Union can definitely afford such a plan!
- This plan should especially cover children and adolescents. The EU must allocate more resources to better treat the youngest cancer patients. Access to the most innovative therapies and the introduction of vaccination campaigns that will enable us to reduce the number of cancers caused by viral infections play a unique role here.
- Last but not least we need to understand that the social partners (SP) and civil society organisations (CSO) have an indispensable role to play by disseminating best practices and providing relevant information – about what can cause cancer, about helping people recognise early symptoms, promoting prevention and inspiring healthy lifestyles. Their efforts shall be supported, including by devoting relevant funds under ESF+ for joint actions in combating cancer and for dissemination of best practices on health prevention.

- We must clearly stress on every occasion that the fight against cancer should, to a much larger extent than before, become the subject of collaboration and co-financing by EU countries.