The meeting opened at 13.45 on Thursday, 27 May 2021, with Bartosz Arłukowicz (Chair) presiding.

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted.

2. Chair’s announcements

BECA Chair Bartosz Arłukowicz (PPE, PL) referred to the European Week against Cancer, an annual campaign that runs from 25 to 31 May 2021. He expressed his support for this initiative, underlining the importance of discussing the problems and potential solutions related to cancer.

3. Public Hearing - “Unlocking the potential of Artificial Intelligence in cancer research and care”

The hearing was organised in association with the Special Committee on Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age (AIDA).

The Chair explained that the hearing would address in particular the use of AI in cancer research, cancer care and personalised cancer medicine, as well as issues related to the treatment of health data and ensuring patients’ data privacy.
The AIDA Chair, Dragoș Tudorache, (Renew, RO) delivering his own introductory remarks, emphasised that AI holds a lot of promise in finding new ways to fight cancer, and that, in light of the recent adoption of Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan and the Commission proposal for a Regulation on AI, the discussion is very timely.

The hearing consisted of four parts: first, on experiences of AI in imaging, detecting, and diagnosing of cancer; second, on experiences of AI in cancer surgery and treatment; third, on the role of AI for personalised medicine in the field of cancer research and cancer care; and fourth, on AI and big data in cancer care, with a focus on developing technical, organisational and ethical standards.

Panel 1: “Effects on the ground: experiences of AI in imaging, detecting and diagnosing cancer”

Two expert speakers took the floor: Professor Amparo Alonso-Betanzos, explained that technology and digitalisation have become an integral part of medicine and that AI could advance the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, but also develop new drugs and improve the quality of life of patients in a much more efficient way. Professor Regina Beets-Tan highlighted that the field of cancer care is advancing in several domains, such as screening, use of minimally invasive treatment, precision medicine, and increased use of imaging, whereas she highlighted several recommendations for measures to be taken at EU-level.

In the ensuing Q&A session, the following Members took the floor: Karlo Ressler (AIDA) (PPE, HR), Romana Jerković (S&D, HR), Nicolae Ștefănuță (Renew, RO), Alessandra Basso (AIDA) (ID, IT), Piernicola Pedicini (Verts/ALE, IT), Joanna Kopcińska (ECR, PL), Kateřina Konečná (The Left, CS), Tomislav Sokol (PPE, HR), Nicolás González Casares (S&D, ES), Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR, ES), Giorgos Georgiou (The Left, CY).

Panel 2: Effects on the ground: experiences of AI in cancer surgery and treatment

Two expert speakers took the floor: Professor Domenico D'Ugo pointed out that AI is already present all along the patient journey -from early detection to diagnosis and treatment-, whereas he stressed that the development of AI applications for health care should not be market but patient driven. Dr Emilio Alba Conejo focused on natural language processing which aims to describe useful parameters in clinical practice, whereas he explained that nowadays precision medicine relies on different ‘omics’ technologies (such as genomics, transcriptomics and proteomics) to personalise the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of cancer patients.

In the ensuing Q&A session, the following Members took the floor: Maria Manuel Leitão Marques (AIDA) (S&D, PT), Svenja Hahn (AIDA) (Renew, DE), Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR, ES).

The Commission representative Yiannos Tolias stated that, over the last five years, 220 AI-based medical devices had been approved, whereas he pointed to issues related to the trustworthiness, robustness, ethics and transparency of those AI systems.
The BECA rapporteur Véronique Trillet-Lenoir (Renew, FR) took the floor to wrap up the first part of the hearing by summarising how the fight against cancer can benefit from the use of AI, while also pointing to the obstacles that these innovations still face. She concluded that doctors will have to evolve in their practice, but that algorithms will not replace doctors.

Panel 3: Towards personalised medicine: AI in cancer research and care

Two expert speakers took the floor: Dr Artur Kowalik explained the need for an Electronic Health Record (EHR) collecting “Big data”, and stressed that, without such a record, data will continue being lost for the EU. Dr Geneviève Almouzni explained that the access to information based on big data is dramatically changing clinical practice, and that AI helps to gain insight into mechanisms of disease and build predictive models, eventually assisting clinical decision making.

In the ensuing Q&A session, the following Members took the floor:
Peter Liese (PPE, DE), Ivars Ijabs (Renew, LV), Joëlle Mélin (ID, FR), Bronis Ropé (Verts/ALE, LT), Chiara Gemma (NI, IT), Deirdre Clune (PPE, IE), Adam Jarubas (PPE, PL).

The Commission representative Gabriele Mazzini pointed to the recent AI package of measures adopted by the Commission on 21 April 2021 with the aim to turn Europe into the global hub for trustworthy artificial intelligence, including a proposal for a Regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence which, when it comes to the health sector, will be applied in conjunction with the existing Regulation on medical devices.

Panel 4: AI and big data in cancer care: Developing technical, organisational and ethical standards

Two expert speakers took the floor: Dr Xosé M. Fernández underlined the importance of having extensive, good quality data sets, while he also elaborated on the importance of data interpretability and highlighted the need for harmonisation of data. Jelena Malinina illustrated the use of AI in cancer research and the whole cancer pathway, while pointing to the current legal gaps, and highlighted the importance of the new EU Regulations on medical devices and in-vitro diagnostic devices.

In the ensuing Q&A session, the following Members took the floor:
Alessandra Moretti (S&D, IT), Susana Solis Pérez (AIDA) (Renew, ES), Kim van Sparrentak (AIDA) (Verts/ALE, NE).

Two Commission representatives took the floor next:
Owe Langfeldt underlined that the GDPR is a robust but flexible framework, and pointed out that the Commission had presented the first evaluation report last summer whereas it called on the data protection authorities to provide guidance which is now in preparation. Ander Elustondo focused mostly on the development of the European Health Data Space and the legislative proposal in preparation, while he explained that the data space will contribute to the cross-border use of health data and the advancement of the digital single
market in health.

Wrapping up the hearing, the Chair underlined that precise and swift diagnosis is key for winning the fight against cancer, and that AI can help to save human lives more efficiently; therefore supporting research in this area is pivotal.

The meeting closed at 17:40.

4. **Date and place of next meeting**

16 June 2021, 09.00-12.00
Brussels
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<th>Member</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bartosz Arłukowicz, Joanna Kopcińska, Ivars Ijabs</td>
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<td>Alessandra Basso, Johan Danielsson, Giorgos Georgiou, Peter Liese, Joëlle Mélin, Karlo Ressler, Michèle Rivasi, Bronis Ropė, Dragoş Tudorache, Kim Van Sparrentak, Alessandra Moretti, Jörgen Warborn, Nicolás González Casares, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Nicolae Ștefănuță,</td>
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**209 (7)**

**216 (3)**

**56 (8)** (Točka od dnevnog reda/Bodu požednog reda/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darbotvarkės punktas/Napirendi punto/Punt Agenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punet de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Punkt på föredragningslistan)
По приглашению президента/Пор инвitatион del presidente/На pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair/Sur l’invitation du président/ На poziv predsjednika/Su invito del presidente/Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/ Faq stedina tc̣-Chairman’/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitaţia preşedintelui/ На pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Ампаро Алонсо-Бетаньос, Доменико Д’Уго, Альба Эмилио, Йелена Малинина, Хосе Фернандес, Регина Беет-Тан, Артур Ковалёк, Женевьев Алмозини

Другие институции и органы/Оtras instituciones y organismos/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner og organer/Andere Organe und Einrichtungen/Muut toimielimet ja elimet/Λοιπά θεσμικά όργανα και οργανισμοί/Other institutions and bodies/Autres institutions et organes/Druge institucije i tijela/Andre institutioner og organer/Más intézmények és szervek/Other institutions and bodies/Altri istituzioni e altri organi/Citas instituições e outros órgãos/Andere institutii și organe/Outras instituições e outros órgãos/Alle institusjoner og organer/Andra institutioner och organ

Толияс Ианнис, Лангфельд Ове, Маззини Габриэле, Андрэ Элустондо Яорегуи

Другие участники/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Drugi sudionici/Altri partecipanti/Citi klátesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztevők/Participanti ohra/Andere aanwezig/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Alţi participanţi/Inni účastníci/Drugí uděleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare