



Response by the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) on Cancer Plan Roadmap

EUPHA, the European Public Health Association, is pleased with the opportunity for responding to the Roadmap for the Commission's initiative: Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

Action on cancer starts with prevention, as acknowledged in the Commission's plan. As emphasised in the Joint Statement '[Prevention at the heart of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#)', co-signed by EUPHA and over 30 other health NGOs, it is important to address cancer prevention as part of the wider task of reducing the burden of the other main Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), for three reasons.

First, all of these are driven by exposures to common, modifiable risk factors, especially tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy diets, insufficient physical activity, and air pollution. Second, they are all socially patterned, afflicting the poorest most. Third, without effective action, and especially prevention, they threaten the sustainability of health systems.

Effective action to prevent cancer requires action at all levels, from the individual, by helping them to make healthy choices, through the social determinants of health, addressing the causes of the causes, an further upstream, to tackle the increasingly important political and commercial determinants of health. It is essential to retain a focus on those corporate entities, including not just the tobacco industry, but also alcohol companies and others, that produce and market some of the main carcinogens contributing to the burden of cancer in Europe today.

Cancer screening can play a role, but only if evidence-based. It will be important to ensure that policies address the entire system within which screening takes place and not just the screening process, to ensure that the potential health gains are actually achieved, which they often are not. This must also take account of changing circumstances, including new diagnostic tools, new treatments, and changing diseases patterns. We highlight the recent policy brief by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies and WHO EURO on screening as well as the Horizon 2020 EU-TOPIA project which address these issues.

There is a need for enhanced systems to exchange information on cancer prevention, taking advantage of the unique natural laboratory provided by the 27 member states and, in many cases, the regions within them. There is also a need to strengthen research on innovative treatments and, especially, models of care that ensure that everyone has access to the best possible treatment within the available resources.

We are pleased to note the link to Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and to the '[One Health' Action Plan](#) given that cancer patients are at particular risk from infections, during major surgery and chemotherapy. We believe further multi-stakeholder exchanges and concerted action should bring the two initiatives together.

We note the link to Health Technology Assessment (HTA), considering [ongoing Commission efforts on the legislative proposal for HTA regulation](#) and for all the reasons presented therein. EU countries can benefit from collaborative efforts to inform decision of (dis)investment in preventive tools, diagnostics and therapeutics, and in public health interventions, such as screening. Recognising that all health systems face limited resources, it is essential that decisions on innovative medicines take full account of cost-effectiveness, a process that would be aided by much greater transparency on development costs. Finally, high-quality, up-to-date population-level data is key, and therefore, the creation of registries and of mechanisms for rapid and safe information exchange ought to be supported.

EUPHA is ready to support the European Commission in its action on cancer. As a scientific organization we can provide the evidence base and act a platform for the public health community in Europe.

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The European Public Health Association, or EUPHA in short, is an umbrella organisation for public health associations in Europe. Our network of national associations of public health represents around 20'000 public health professionals. Our mission is to facilitate and activate a strong voice of the public health network by enhancing visibility of the evidence and by strengthening the capacity of public health professionals. EUPHA contributes to the preservation and improvement of public health in the European region through capacity and knowledge building. We are committed to creating a more inclusive Europe, narrowing all health inequalities among Europeans, by facilitating, activating, and disseminating strong evidence-based voices from the public health community and by strengthening the capacity of public health professionals to achieve evidence-based change.

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