Citizens' summary

European Partnership for Action Against Cancer

WHAT’S THE ISSUE?

- Every year, some 3.2 million Europeans are diagnosed with cancer – the second most common cause of death in Europe.
- Apart from the health implications, the economic burden on society is increasing as the European population ages.
- Cancer (death) rates vary dramatically across the EU, both within and between countries (see graph). Death rates in some countries are twice as high as in others.
- Long-term, sustainable action on cancer is needed to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for Europeans.

![Graph showing estimated mortality from cancer in the European Union, 2006](source: European Cancer Observatory (ECO))

WHAT MEASURES WOULD BE INTRODUCED?

Possible areas to be covered by the initiative include:

- **Prevention**
  
  One third of all cancers are preventable – prevention is the most cost-effective, long-term cancer strategy.
  
  The European partnership aims to implement healthy lifestyle measures to counter major risk factors such as poor eating habits, smoking, physical inactivity and alcohol consumption.
  
  Another important area is early detection, which can dramatically reduce the impact of cancer. The partnership would focus on providing high-quality, controlled breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening for all EU citizens of the appropriate age (± 125 million examinations a year).

- **Identifying and spreading good practice in cancer-related healthcare**
  
  By identifying, sharing and applying best practice, the partnership hopes to encourage a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive approach to cancer-related healthcare and ensure more effective care and a better quality of life for cancer patients.
• **Coordinating cancer research**
  The partnership will work to coordinate all areas of cancer research in the EU, from all funding sources, to **identify discrepancies, obstacles and research gaps** and avoid duplicating research.

• **Collecting accurate and comparable information and data**
  The partnership will examine current obstacles to doing this, and look for solutions. The goal being to enable **effective planning and monitoring of cancer strategies** throughout the EU.

**WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?**

A European partnership would:

• **help all EU countries tackle cancer more evenly** and effectively by sharing information, resources, best practise and expertise.

• **avoid fragmented and duplicated effort** and **maximise the limited resources available** – by **coordinating action** on cancer involving member countries, scientific experts, patient organisations and other key stakeholders.

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