

Flash report

Meeting

Sub-group on Cancer under the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases

12 November 2021

On 12 November 2021, the Sub-group on Cancer under the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases held a virtual meeting, jointly chaired by DG RTD and DG SANTE. The representatives of 26 Member States, plus Norway and Iceland, attended the meeting together with a number of Commission services, and agencies¹.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan update and Roadmap

Sub-group Members were updated on the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan Implementation Roadmap, and the planned **revision of the 2003 Council Recommendations on Cancer Screening**, where advice from the EC's Group of Chief Scientific Advisers will be sought. The work is being undertaken through targeted workshops with a draft opinion expected in January 2022; a stakeholders' meeting will be held the same month to discuss a set of possible recommendations for feedback before finalisation.

Regarding the **Cancer Inequalities Register**, a Thematic Working Group of the SGPP Sub-group on Cancer was established and met firstly on 19 October where the draft framework and web interface were presented; a second meeting is scheduled for 2 December.

Update on the Mission on Cancer

DG RTD updated Sub-group Members on the Mission on Cancer. The next and final meetings of the current Mission Board on Cancer will take place on 15 November and 9-10 December respectively. A new Board will be established to support and advice on the implementation stage of the Mission.

On 29 October 2021, the Thematic Group on Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructures/Centres of the SGPP Sub-group on Cancer met; the next meeting is scheduled for 26 November 2021 when *i.a.* a taxonomy of terms will be addressed and the quick scan of Cancer Infrastructures in European countries² discussed. On 24 November 2021, a stakeholder webinar³ will be held on the Health Policy Platform to present implementation of the Mission on Cancer and the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

Member States interventions

¹ Directorates-General represented included Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CNECT), Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC), Eurostat (ESTAT), Energy (ENER), Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL), Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (FISMA), Research and Innovation (RTD), Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO), Health and Food Safety (SANTE), the Legal Service (SJ), as well as the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and representatives from a number of EU decentralised and the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA).

² <https://www.nivel.nl/nl/publicatie/quick-scan-cancer-infrastructures-european-countries-report>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/eu-mission-cancer-and-europes-beating-cancer-plan-2021-nov-24_en

Member States shared developments at the national level. **Italy** outlined their current national prevention plan, including the strategic lines of primary prevention and early diagnosis. Italy then defined the objectives for the recently convened inter-institutional task force which has the remit to draft the new national prevention plan. **Finland** outlined how the strategy behind the Finnish National Cancer Center has led to better patient outcomes via leveraging clusters of excellence. They stressed that building their health ecosystem is a joint venture of citizens, companies, authorities and others. **Sweden** explained the responsibilities of various bodies under the national health care system. How the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan fits into the national cancer strategy, established in 2010, was explained thoroughly. **Slovenia** explained their national cancer plan to slow down the incidence of cancer, as well as successes related to population-based screening programmes for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer. This was complemented by identification of actions to increase survival rates and, finally, to activities related to the improvement of the quality of life of cancer patients. Member States expressed their strong interest in being informed about these national programmes and initiatives.

The European Cancer Imaging Initiative

DG CNECT informed Sub-group Members of the **European Cancer Imaging Initiative**, one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, which aims to establish a federated European infrastructure for cancer imaging data. Planned to be launched in the second half of 2022, it shall be an interoperable, privacy-preserving and secure infrastructure enabling cross border access and federated/distributed analysis of cancer imaging data, to be used by clinicians, researchers and innovators for more precise and faster clinical decision-making, diagnostics, treatments and predictive medicine. An inherent objective is also to create an EU 'atlas' of anonymised cancer images accessible to a wide range of stakeholders. The Members of the Sub-group were invited to provide initial comments⁴ on its overall scope and reflect on potential national contact points and stakeholders.

European Partnerships under Horizon Europe

Members of the Sub-group were informed by DG RTD about the proposed **Innovative Health Initiative**, which builds on the Innovative Medicines Initiative but with a broadened composition of industry sectors, with the intention to help create an EU-wide industry-driven health research and innovation ecosystem that facilitates translation of scientific knowledge into innovation. Moreover, Members of the Sub-group were informed of the proposed **European Partnership on Transforming Health and Care Systems**, which will rethink and redesign health and care systems to deliver better knowledge on how best practice and technological and organisational innovations can be shared and adapted. Within this, it will develop an ecosystem for connecting relevant stakeholders to allow for a swift scaling up and transfer of successful innovations to different health and care systems, providing clear linkages to the objectives of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the Mission on Cancer. The Members of the Sub-group were invited to consider synergies with initiatives undertaken by Member States⁵.

Conclusions

The Chairs thanked everyone for their attention and valuable contributions and reminded participants of the next meeting on 16 December 2021.

⁴ CNECT-H3@ec.europa.eu

⁵ For more information about both Partnerships, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe/candidates-european-partnerships-health_en