A European Act of Unity for World Cancer Day on 4 February 2017

Cancer is a global issue, and on World Cancer Day, we must unite our forces more than ever to advance research in the fight against cancer, to implement better prevention and care policies, and to see patients live longer and better throughout the disease and after. In 2013, more than one and a quarter million people died from cancer in the EU just over one quarter (26.0 %) of the total number of deaths.

To reduce the burden of cancer in Europe we must focus on all aspects of cancer control, ensuring that policy is designed to support effective implementation. This begins with comprehensive cancer prevention policies which restrict access to tobacco products, encourage people to maintain a healthy body weight and protect their skin from harmful UV rays, as acknowledged by the European Code against Cancer (ECAC).

ECAC outlines the 12 steps that everyone in society can follow to reduce the risk of cancer, making it a vital tool to guide EU citizens to adapt their lifestyles to help prevent cancer. Governmental actions are also needed to ensure comprehensive, evidence-based screening programmes for the prevention and early detection of cancer.

All EU citizens should have equal and affordable access to innovative cancer medicines. This will require international collaboration, with all involved parties, working together constructively to ensure the prices of cancer medicines are affordable.

Finally, those living with cancer should be supported by every means possible, including protective and non-discriminative policies in the workplace, access to rehabilitation programmes and tailored palliative care programmes if and when necessary. World Cancer Day is an opportunity to remind us that collaboration is key in the fight against cancer and that to advance, we must do so together.

Cancer knows no borders, and collaborative research leading to innovative treatments and a better understanding of the disease is crucial in the fight against the disease. In order to beat cancer sooner, it is necessary to ensure that European policies and the EU’s regulatory environment foster innovative research projects. Also, the EU must make room for adequate funding initiatives, such as Horizon 2020, to support researchers and scientific talent, as the sharing of equipment and facilities is important to support collaboration. There is a need for enabling legislation to protect the mobility and collaboration of academics, researchers and patients to participate in clinical trials or have their data and scientific findings shared efficiently and responsibly.

We support the work of all relevant professionals involved in cancer care, as well as the patient and care community, in order to find sustainable solutions to foster innovation within current, and future cancer care. Adopting a culture of innovation requires a multidisciplinary team approach – with the patient at the centre, and as an integral part of the team. It must take a whole-system and whole-patient perspective on cancer care, match unmet patient needs and be guided by high quality real-world data that include patient-relevant outcomes accurately reflecting the impact of innovation in clinical practice.

On World Cancer Day, it is important to put an emphasis on children and adolescents with cancer. We call on the EU to address the need to develop better and kinder treatments for children and adolescents with cancer across the EU and improve access to these treatments. Paediatric tumours are still a threat across Europe, with 6,000 young people dying every year, and over 300,000 European survivors still live with long-term treatment side effects.

As members of the MEPS Against Cancer group, we engage to shape the future EU health and research policy towards a future where no one dies of cancer and survivors live to the fullest. We call on the European Union to strengthen its policies in the fight against cancer, as well as making full and appropriate use of the existing guidelines and initiatives shaping policy making and funding. Ahead of World Cancer Day on 4 February 2017, we call on the European Union to put cancer research at the heart of its health and scientific agendas for the benefit of cancer patients across Europe and the scientific community. Further, we call on the EU to boost its role as an important funder and enabler of research in Europe and beyond.

This statement is written in collaboration with, and supported by, European Cancer Leagues (ECL), Cancer Research UK (CRUK), the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO) and the European Society for Paediatric Oncology (SIOPE).

Social media and engaging: We encourage you to share this letter and show your support on social media on World Cancer Day using #ActOfUnity #WorldCancerDay and tagging @CRUK_policy, @EuropeanCancer; @SIOPEurope; @CancerLeagues and @MAC_MEPs

The MAC group is an all-party political group on cancer in the European Parliament. MAC members are from all political groups, and come from different EU member states. The MAC group was founded in 2005 and remains the only dedicated group to cancer policy in the European Parliament.

This statement has been endorsed by:

Alojz Peterle (EPP, Slovenia)

Pavel Poc (S&D, Czech Republic)

Charles Tannock (ECR, United Kingdom)

Theresa Griffin (S&D, United Kingdom)

Lynn Boylan (GUE/NGL, Ireland)

Biljana Borzan (S&D, Croatia)

Brian Hayes (EPP, Ireland)

Marian Harkin (ALDE, Ireland)

Therese Comodini-Cachia (EPP, Malta)

Elena Gentile (S&D, Italy)

Dame Glenis Willmott (S&D, United Kingdom)

Deirdre Clune (EPP, Ireland)

Cristian-Silviu Busoi (EPP, Romania)

Ashley Fox (ECR, United Kingdom)

Miriam Dalli (S&D, Malta)

Francoise Grossetête (EPP, France)

Karin Kadenbach (S&D, Austria)

Miroslav Mikolášik (EPP, Slovakia)

Piernicola Pedicini (EFDD, Italy)

Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP, Finland)

Christel Schaldemose (S&D, Denmark)

Jutta Steinruck (S&D, Germany)

Dubravka Šuica (EPP, Croatia)

Tibor Szanui (S&D, Hungary)

Nessa Childers (S&D, Ireland)

Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE, France)

Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (DE, S&D)
About SIOPE

The European Society for Paediatric Oncology (SIOPE) is the leading organisation in Europe working to ensure a brighter future to children and young people with cancer. Representing more than 1,600 professional members across 34 European countries, SIOPE addresses the main challenges faced by paediatric oncology professionals through a multidisciplinary perspective. Its mission is to address the two goals of the next decade: to increase the cure rate and the quality of lives of children and young people with cancer in Europe. Learn more: www.siope.eu

About Cancer Research UK

- Cancer Research UK is the world’s leading cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research.
- Cancer Research UK’s pioneering work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has helped save millions of lives.
- Cancer Research UK receives no government funding for its life-saving research. Every step it makes towards beating cancer relies on every pound donated.
- Cancer Research UK has been at the heart of the progress that has already seen survival in the UK double in the last forty years.
- Today, 2 in 4 people survive their cancer for at least 10 years. Cancer Research UK’s ambition is to accelerate progress so that by 2034, 3 in 4 people will survive their cancer for at least 10 years.
- Cancer Research UK supports research into all aspects of cancer through the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses.
- Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK’s vision is to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured.

For further information about Cancer Research UK’s work or to find out how to support the charity, please call +44 (0)300 123 1022 or visit www.cancerresearchuk.org. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

About the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

The vision of Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) is for a Europe Free of Cancers. The role of ECL is to facilitate the collaboration between cancer leagues throughout Europe and to influence EU and pan-European policies.

The mission of the Association of European Cancer Leagues is to influence and improve cancer control and cancer care in Europe through collaboration between its members in their fight against cancer, and to influence EU and pan-European policies. The major fields of activity for the member cancer leagues include cancer prevention, public information, professional education and assistance, as well as information services and support for cancer patients and their families and relatives, participation in, and support for, cancer research and advocacy and awareness campaigns.

About ECCO European CanCer Organisation

Through its 25 Member Societies - representing over 80,000 professionals – ECCO (the European CanCer Organisation) is the only multidisciplinary organisation that connects and responds to all stakeholders in oncology Europe-wide.

ECCO exists to provide a cohesive platform for European cancer societies and organisations to work together to improve cancer patient outcomes, and to be the unified voice of the European cancer professionals’ community when addressing common policy issues.