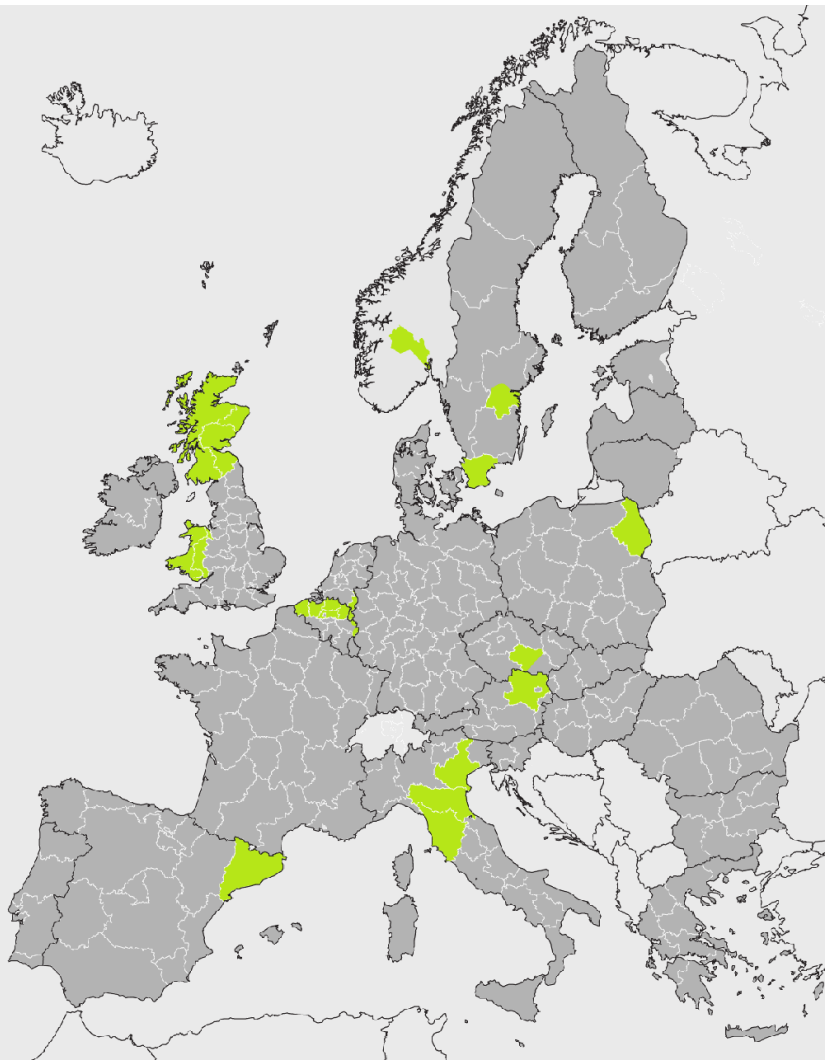


# EUREGHA CONTRIBUTES TO SHAPING THE EUROPE'S BEATING CANCER PLAN

May 2020



EUREGHA has officially contributed to the public consultation on **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan** launched by the European Commission. By sending its position on the next cancer plan, EUREGHA makes sure that the Commission considers the importance of having an integrated care approach in any future steps in cancer care.

Even though healthcare is predominantly a competence of Member States (and often regions), there is a clear added value in supporting and improving cancer care in the European Union. As 3.5 million people are being diagnosed with cancer every year (European Commission, 2019), the disease has a clear social and financial impact. With the health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides on the lead, it became apparent that now is the time to be ambitious and make actual changes.

EUREGHA (European Regional Health Authorities) believes that qualitative cancer care evolves around an **integrated care approach** with screening and care delivery at the center. By exploring regional good practices related to cancer screenings and implementing evidence-based strategies for early detection, health professionals are placed best to target vulnerable groups of people. Cancer patients and cancer survivors experience significant challenges in their daily lives. In particular, the survivorship topic with its physical, emotional, and financial consequences, should be addressed at EU level. Moreover, cancer survivors are also at a greater risk for developing second type of cancers and other health conditions.

According to EUREGHA, the EU should prioritise on a holistic care approach focused on three aspects:

- **Prevention**
- **Screening and early diagnoses**
- **Life after cancer**

## **Prevention**

Cancer can be reduced and controlled by implementing evidence-based strategies for early detection. Healthcare professionals have an essential role to play in providing citizens with reliable information and actively promoting healthy lifestyles. Specific sets of activities and designed strategies need to be put in place to successfully integrate evidence-based public health intervention in particular settings (e.g. primary care clinics, community centres and schools). Health professionals are close to the citizens and are placed best to disseminate information and reach all groups of people (including the most vulnerable ones).

## **Screening and early diagnosis**

EUREGHA believes that health authorities and healthcare professionals are best placed to identify regional good practices related to cancer screening. By sharing reports on the implementation of population-based cancer screening programmes, particular obstacles to

participation, quality and resources can be addressed. Regional workshops can, furthermore, focus on overcoming those specific obstacles and renewed screening programmes can be established throughout the European Union. All the actions eventually add up to improved practices and implementation of local and regional cancer screening programmes.

## **Life after cancer**

Cancer does not leave a patient when the individual is healed. Cancer survivorship relates to the overall wellbeing of cancer patients, starting at the moment of the diagnosis until the end of the patient's life. To help cancer survivors best, integrated care plans should be emphasized. Integrated care blends all types of care and addresses a wide array of medical and psychological challenges. For these patients, it is important to fight stigmas and discrimination.

To this end, EUREGHA considers that there is clear EU added value in supporting and facilitating

- Exploring and delivering **regional workshops** to identify good practices in existing cancer screening programmes to improve the practical implementation of local and regional cancer screening programmes;
- **Transparency** around costs of research, development and production;
- More **cross-border collaboration** on information, regulation and procurement, leading to realignment of research and development, and management of factors influencing consumer demand for medicines;
- A special focus on an **integrated system of care** that guides and tracks patients over time through a comprehensive array of health services spanning all levels of intensity of cancer care;

Investing in the health and wellbeing of cancer patients is vital in order to achieve broader policy objectives related to employment growth, culture, justice and sustainability. As a matter of fact, preventing and early diagnosis of cancer patients, and bringing cancer survivors back into society has a positive impact on our daily lives. EUREGHA fully supports the European Commission's message "**A Europe that strives for more**" and is hopeful of bringing in more regional perspectives to enhance the overall quality of prevention and care for cancer patients.

**EUREGHA is the reference network for European Regional and Local Health Authorities.** We bring together a critical mass of knowledge and expertise and encourage diversity with the purpose of helping our members to improve the efficiency and quality of health systems and services in Europe.

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