

europaean  
cancer  
ORGANISATION

# 2020 in Review

The Annual Report of the  
European Cancer Organisation



# The European Cancer Organisation convenes oncology professionals and patients to agree policy, advocate for positive change and speak up for the European cancer community

## Our Mission

To reduce the burden of cancer, improve outcomes and the quality of care for cancer patients, through multidisciplinary and multi-professionalism



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## 2020: A Year We Created a Brighter Future Despite Challenges

Management guru Peter Drucker has a simple dictum that “*You cannot predict the future, but you can create it*”. I often think of this when reflecting on the year that has been.

It is hard to overstate the enormous harm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdown measures across many walks of life, and not least cancer care. I, my Board colleagues and all the E.C.O. family are determined to do all we can to continue raising the alarm about the late diagnosis wave coming. We need to ensure every citizen understands, that when it comes to cancer or any other life-threatening disease, never, ever, put it off. However, it is also critical that we do not permit such ill wills to blow us off our longer-term course.

At the European Cancer Organisation, during 2020, we were determined that we would not allow external events to slow down the momentum of implementing our four-year [Strategy](#), establishing nine new powerful [Focused Topic Networks](#) of collaboration and consensus building, as well as launching a new brand in addition to a new website.

I have been delighted that the European Commission and European Parliament, under the leadership of Ursula von der Leyen, have undertaken the exact same spirit by investing €5.1 billion in the EU4Health 2021-2027 programme, establishing the EU Cancer Mission, producing Europe’s constructive new Beating Cancer Plan, and conducting ground-breaking scrutiny work on cancer policy. After many years of our [Member Societies](#) and [Patient Advisory Committee](#) advocating for real action on cancer, finally important new initiatives are under way.

All of this means that, as I look ahead to 2021 and beyond, despite the great work ahead of us in rebuilding cancer services post or along COVID-19, it is with good grounds for optimism that better is on its way, as we now turn to the important business of implementation.



## | MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Europe's Beating Cancer Plan offers us:

- A pan national goal for HPV cancer elimination
- New binding targets on tobacco use reduction, screening access and comprehensive cancer care provision
- Commitments to the public measurement of cancer inequalities to allow more targeted intervention for their reduction
- Laudable ambitions on prevention policy, from alcohol and food labelling, to air quality improvement and tobacco taxation
- New change-making initiatives on topics such as interdisciplinary education, cancer imaging, genomics, diagnostics, drug repurposing and cancer survivor needs

Allied to this, and all of the fabulous work conducted by our professional members and patient organisations, the European Cancer Organisation too has been making new and important contributions through its advocacy activities and the nine Focused Topic Networks, set up in less than a year, including:

- **The launch of the [European Code of Cancer Practice](#)** – a long lasting tool, already translated in 25 languages, to better embed cancer cancer patient rights and cancer patient empowerment in every healthcare system

- **New policy publications** such as:
  - [Strengthening Europe in the Fight Against Cancer](#)
  - [The Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer in Europe: The 7-Point Plan to Address the Urgency and Build Back Better](#)
  - [Viral Protection: Achieving the Possible. A Four Step Plan for Eliminating HPV Cancers in Europe](#)
  - [It Can Be Done – Beating Inequalities in Cancer Care](#)
  - [Free from Cancer: Achieving Quality of Life for All Cancer Patients and Survivors](#)
- **The publication of three new tumour types in our [Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care series](#)** – [Breast](#), [Prostate](#) and [Lung](#).
- **The creation of the [European Quality Cancer Care Catalogue](#)** – to provide a one-stop-shop for anyone looking for the off-the-shelf tools and techniques already available to help improve cancer care across its many facets

In this Annual Report you can find further details on the policy work of the organisation and the key outputs (and advocacy successes) of our Focused Topic Networks, convening our Member Societies, Patient Advocacy groups and invited stakeholders.

Building a better future for cancer care in Europe is an ongoing mission, duty in fact, for our organisation. Momentum on that task will not abate in 2021. We do invite you to join us in creating it.

**Matti Aapro** President [European Cancer Organisation](#)

## Strategy 2020–2023



### Pillar 1: Policy and Advocacy

- On behalf of our Member Societies, we strive to be a leading organisation in **the development of oncopolicy and advocacy at the European level**
- On behalf of our Member Societies, we are available as a **resource to European institutions to convene and facilitate** across disciplines, professions and with patient advocates
- We advocate on key policy issues, **speaking with one voice** on behalf of our Member Societies and patient groups, to enhance the impact of their expertise and experience

### Pillar 2: Convenor and Facilitator around Focused Topics

- We act as **the “federation” of the European cancer community** – amplifying the important work of our Member Societies and Patient Advisory Committee
- We convene our Member Societies, patient groups and other stakeholders for **discussion and exchange, building consensus and coordinating activities**, including through our **Focused Topic Networks**
- We believe in **collaboration**, bringing together those who share our Mission and Vision to promote multidisciplinary and multi-professionalism for the benefit of patients, as well as **advocating across Europe for our agreed policies**

## | A UNIQUE YEAR IN CANCER POLICY AND ADVOCACY

- **HPV cancer elimination – an official EU goal!**
- **Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan with measurable objectives, including:**
  - A Tobacco Free Europe
  - 90% access to cancer screening
  - 90% access to comprehensive cancer centres
  - Supported by measurement tools such as the Inequalities Registry and European Cancer Information System
- **Updates to EU Screening Guidelines confirmed**
- **Launch of the European Code of Cancer Practice**
- **9 New Focused Topic Networks launched**
- **European Cancer Summit 2020**
- **Consensus policy publications on:**
  - Inequalities in Cancer Care
  - The impact of COVID-19 on Cancer Care
  - The policy needs in Cancer Survivorship and Quality of Life
  - HPV Cancer elimination
  - Supported by eight sets of new cancer community consensus resolutions
- **Landmark study on the state-of-play in Cancer Policy in Europe: *Strengthening Europe in the Fight Against Cancer***
- **3 new Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care on:**
  - Breast Cancer
  - Prostate Cancer
  - Lung Cancer
- **New European Quality Cancer Catalogue**



## Towards Tangible and Impactful Policy Improvement

The European Cancer Organisation aims to create and develop ever-strengthening relationships between European institutions and the European cancer care community, and together with its [Member Societies](#), [Patient Advocacy Committee](#) and networks, facilitate collaboration and consensus on [focused topics](#) towards tangible and impactful policy improvement.

The strategic objectives that underpin all our policy activity are:

- **The advancement of multidisciplinary and patient-centricity** in cancer care
- **The promotion of policy recommendations for the improvement of cancer care**, drawing on the Organisation's unique multidisciplinary reach



## Partnership Working with the European Commission

Regular meetings and exchange with DG SANTE and other Directorate Generals:

- Exchanging information
- Conveying our members' actions and perspective
- Sharing recommendations and exploring solutions

Q&A webinars for members with the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Embedded involvement of the European Commission in the European Cancer Summit

Active members of the EU Cancer Mission Assembly via our President, Dr Matti Aapro.

Responses and follow up meetings to all relevant consultations, including on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, the EU Pharmaceutical Strategy, WHO Europe Work Programme, and EU COVID-19 response.



## The European Parliament: The Citizens' Champions on Cancer Policy

The European Parliament are, historically, the strongest and most consistent voice within the EU for coordinated action on cancer.

**The European Cancer Organisation works with all party groups and all Committees to ensure strong parliamentary attention to arising opportunities for improvement in EU cancer policy and issues requiring greater political attention.**

2020 has seen the infrastructure of European Parliament advocacy on cancer policy grow with the establishment of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA), and the Cancer Challenge Intergroup, working alongside the MEPs Against Cancer Group.

The European Parliament will likely be the guardian of the Beating Cancer Plan's implementation, keeping helpful pressure for success. We are pleased to count on so many MEPs as friends of our shared mission: improving outcomes for cancer patients in all parts of Europe.



## The Wider World

The European Cancer Organisation believes in the fundamental principle that we achieve more in all walks of life when we work together.

At the international level, we believe Europe has a leadership role to fulfil in all areas of cancer policy, from prevention to diagnosis, treatment to survivorship, and in research.

With cancer a common societal challenge in every nation, there are enormous learnings to be untapped from formal and informal exchange, enabling organic partnerships to emerge and collaborations to grow.

For that reason, we welcome and invite international organisations from across the globe to participate in our policy activities via our Focused Topic Networks, and actively involve our leaders in global level projects that aim to help all countries go further, faster in the fight against cancer.

We thank organisations such as the WHO, UICC, WHO Europe, IARC, ASCO, OECD and many others such fruitful open partnership working with us and our Networks.

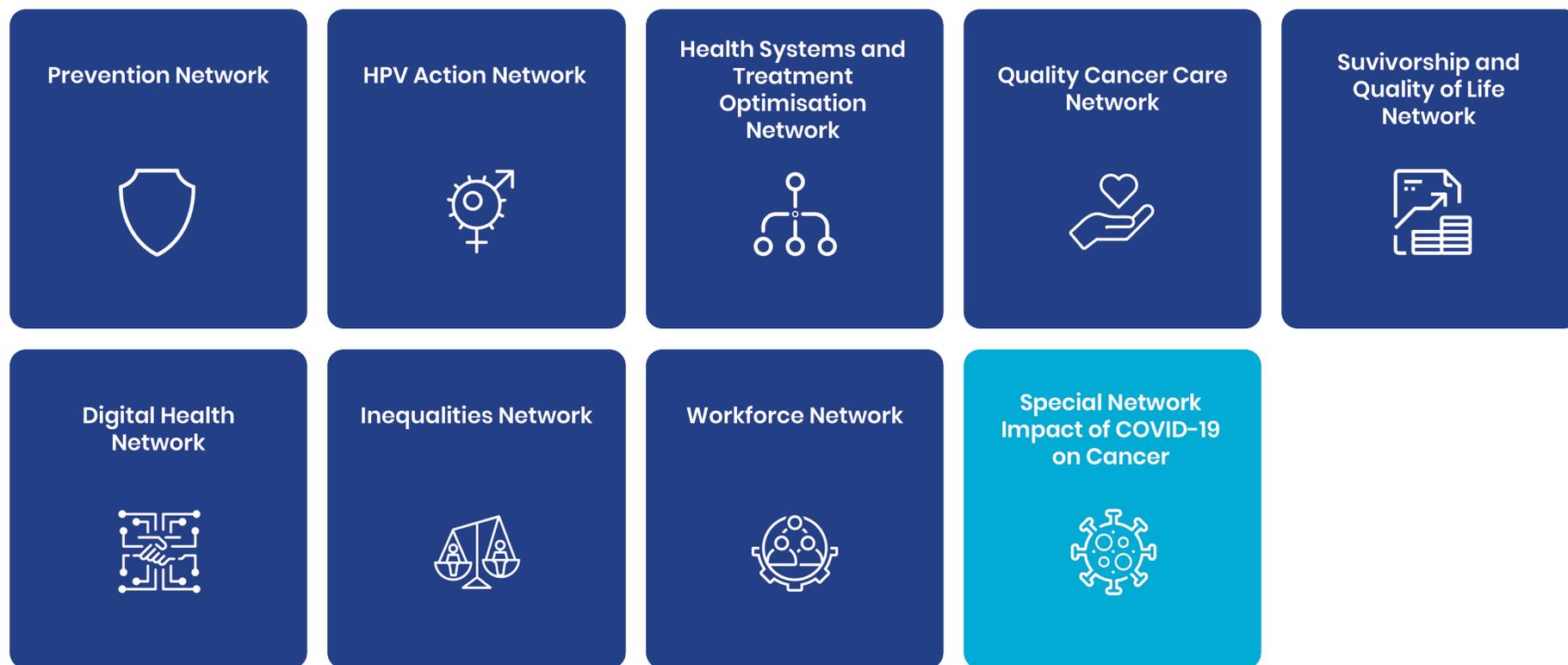


## Strengthening Europe in the Fight Against Cancer

- The European Cancer Organisation was commissioned by the European Parliament Research Service to convey a [report for MEPs](#) on the current state-of-play and opportunities for improvement in cancer policy at the EU level
- The resulting landmark study benefitted from the inputs and oversight of over 60 leading experts across professional fields and patient constituencies
- Chapters analysed the current landscape in areas such as:
  - Causation and prevention of cancer
  - Policy needs for achieving earlier detection and diagnosis of cancer, including screening strategies
  - Means for improving cancer treatment and care in Europe, as well as research
  - The specific requirements and opportunities for progress for rare and childhood cancers
- The 45 recommendations contained in the report have provided a key reference point for decision-makers in the Parliament and Commission and an ongoing basis for our representations



## Focused Topic Networks



## | CONVENING THE CANCER COMMUNITY

**On behalf of its [Member Societies](#) and [Patient Advocacy Groups](#), the European Cancer Organisation convenes interested stakeholders around [nine important topics](#).**

Led by co-chairs from our Member Societies, these Networks have been established to facilitate consensus and joint projects in our [Strategy 2020–2023](#). The programme of the [European Cancer Summit](#) is also based on these nine topics.

Focused Topic Networks do not have a decision-making role in policy work. Where policy needs are identified during Network discussions, our Member Societies are able to make proposals through our [policy approval pathway](#). When policies have been agreed, our Focused Topic Networks support the campaign for the implementation of these policies.





## | CONVENING THE CANCER COMMUNITY

# Special Network on the Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer

### Co-Chairs



**Mirjam Crul**

BOARD MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN CANCER ORGANISATION



**Mark Lawler**

BOARD MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN CANCER ORGANISATION

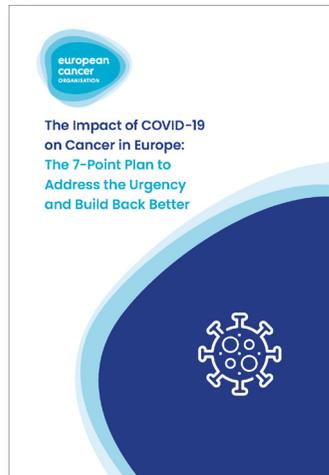
The **Special Network on the Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer** brings together healthcare professionals, patients, researchers, academics and others to:

- Precisely delineate the challenges that COVID-19 has posed to cancer care
- Amplify activities undertaken by the E.C.O. community to address these challenges
- Produce recommendations on the most critical and urgent policy needs

Soon after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cancer and COVID-19 Resources Library was created at [europeanancer.org](http://europeanancer.org)

The Special Network had representations to, and meetings with, the European Commission and hosted a dedicated session at the European Cancer Summit 2020 where a new [Action Plan](#), summarising the combined recommendations, was launched:

**[The Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer in Europe: The 7-Point Plan to Address the Urgency and Build Back Better](#)**



*"Urgent attention is needed not only to restore cancer services but to build back better and be prepared to face upcoming challenges"*

**Action Plan launched in November 2020**



### Looking forward to 2021:

- Launch of the E.C.O. COVID-19 and Cancer Project
- Engaging with the European Commission, the European Parliament (including the Special Committee on Beating Cancer), EU agencies and other relevant EU decision-makers to promote uptake of the recommendations outlined in the "7-Point Plan"

Visual from the Virtual European Cancer Summit 2020: Row 1 - Mirjam Crul (European Cancer Organisation's Special Network on the Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer); Kathy Oliver (European Cancer Organisation's Patient Advisory Committee); Véronique Trillet-Lenoir MEP (European Parliament's Special Committee on Beating Cancer; MEPs Against Cancer Group). Row 2 - Mark Lawler (European Cancer Organisation's Special Network on the Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer); Bente Mikkelsen (World Health Organization); John Ryan (DG SANTE). Row 3 - Nicoletta Luppi (MSD Italia); Jens Spahn (Federal Minister of Health, Germany).



## Prevention Network

### Co-Chairs



**Jan van Meerbeeck**

EUROPEAN RESPIRATORY SOCIETY



**Isabel Teresa Rubio**

EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF BREAST  
CANCER SPECIALISTS

Prevention is key to cancer control but policy recommendations in this area are not always without controversy. **The Prevention Network aims at** fostering fresh consensus and stronger collaboration in all areas of cancer prevention among key interested expert groups and policy-makers, at European and international level, in order to both decrease cancer incidence and advance cancer detection.

A major **activity for the Prevention Network in 2020** has been the [session held at the European Cancer Summit 2020](#), entitled “Early Detection Saves Lives: Taking European Cooperation on Cancer Screening to the Next Level!”. The session featured a lively high-level discussion between all key stakeholders involved in cancer screening, including oncologists, patients, policy-makers, experts and industry representatives.

A consensus [resolution](#) was passed, calling for taking European cooperation on cancer screening to the next level and highlighting key recommendations of the Network to achieve progress.

**Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan** includes two pillars on cancer prevention and early detection, with strong measures including:

- A new EU Cancer Screening Scheme, ensuring 90% target population coverage by 2025 and considering the recommendation of additional cancers, such as prostate, lung and gastric cancer
- An update to the European Code Against Cancer and specific action against all main cancer risk factors (tobacco, alcohol, nutrition, infections, UV)

The EU Cancer Mission and the agreed EU4Health Programme also contain dedicated provisions to fund research and actions aiming at strengthening access to prevention and early detection of cancer.



### Looking forward to 2021:

- Continue developing a holistic approach to cancer prevention
- Play a major role in the strengthening and implementation of Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan and other relevant policy initiatives

Visual from the Virtual European Cancer Summit 2020: Row 1 - Jan Van Meerbeeck (European Cancer Organisation’s Prevention Network); Harry De Koning (Erasmus MC University); Padraic Ward (Roche). Row 2 - Isabel Rubio (European Cancer Organisation’s Prevention Network); Stefan Gijssels (European Cancer Organisation’s Patient Advisory Committee); Frances Fitzgerald MEP. Row 3 - Tit Albreht (Innovative Partnership for Action Against Cancer); Partha Basu (World Health Organization).



## HPV Action Network

### Co-Chairs



**Daniel Kelly**  
EUROPEAN ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY



**Rui Medeiros**  
ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN CANCER LEAGUES

The **HPV Action Network** was launched in December 2019, following the resolution passed at the 2019 European Cancer Summit: **“By 2030, effective strategies to eliminate cancers caused by HPV as a public health problem should be implemented in all European countries”**.

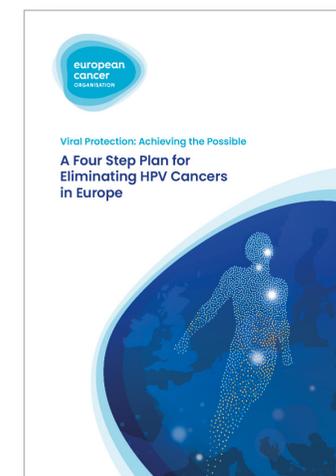
The HPV Action Network urges Europe to make HPV cancer elimination a formal European shared goal.

Published in October 2020, the report [Viral Protection: Achieving the possible](#), formed the basis for the **Network’s advocacy work** on the Beating Cancer Plan, calling for the implementation of gender-neutral HPV vaccination programmes, better cervical cancer screening programmes, adoption of best-practice treatments for all HPV related cancers as well as improved education and awareness for both patients and health professionals.

After the successful [session at the European Cancer Summit 2020](#) called “Viral Protection: Achieving the Possible. The elimination of HPV cancers in Europe” which saw two important [resolutions](#) passing, our Network Co-Chair Daniel Kelly presented the case for gender-neutral HPV vaccination throughout the EU to the Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA) at a public hearing at the European Parliament on 2 December 2020 with great consensus achieved.

**Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan**, published on 3 February 2021, turned into concrete results many of the HPV Action Network advocacy efforts:

- With dedicated funds under the EU4Health programme and elsewhere, member states will be supported to extend routine HPV vaccination against HPV to girls and boys
- There will be action on cervical cancer screening through a new EU-supported Cancer Screening Scheme to help member states ensure that 90% of women are offered screening by 2025
- The Knowledge Centre on Cancer will provide new guidelines and quality assurance schemes on cervical cancer screening, diagnosis, treatment rehabilitation, follow-up and palliative care



**Action Report  
launched in  
October 2020**

### Looking forward to 2021:

- Moving towards the implementation of Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan, with a high-level webinar on the value of vaccination and screening, with a keynote speech from Walter Ricciardi, Chair of the EU Cancer Mission, planned in February 2021
- Developing a new project “Action Now on HPV”

Visual: Daniel Kelly, HPV Action Network Co-Chair, speaking at the European Parliament’s Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA) hearing ‘Facilitating a healthy lifestyle: how to reduce cancer related lifestyle risk factors’.



# Health Systems and Treatment Optimisation Network

## Co-Chairs



**Denis Lacombe**

EUROPEAN ORGANISATION FOR RESEARCH AND TREATMENT OF CANCER



**Yolande Lievens**

EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR RADIOTHERAPY AND ONCOLOGY

With the advent of innovation at an unprecedented pace in the cancer field, health systems are being faced with increasing challenges to ensure development of optimised treatments and their equal access by all cancer patients who need them. **The Health Systems and Treatment Optimisation Network aims at** providing solutions to elevate the ability of European cancer control strategies to foster, identify and measure cancer treatment innovation, translate it into treatments and deliver them to cancer patients.

**A major activity for the Health Systems and Treatment Optimisation Network in 2020** has been the session it held at the [European Cancer Summit 2020](#). The session featured an open exchange between leading experts and wide-ranging stakeholders on key challenges to be addressed in order to achieve the Network's aims, including current gaps to the cancer research continuum in Europe.

A consensus [resolution](#) was passed, calling for support to independent multidisciplinary cancer research, addressing questions relevant and meaningful for patients and public health.

**Europe's Beating Cancer Plan's** 'Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment for All' initiative recognises the goals of optimising treatment and increased access to therapeutic innovation.

The proposed EU Cancer Mission also includes several references to the need for treatment optimisation, while the new EU Pharmaceutical Strategy mentions providing support to academic pragmatic trials, improving treatments by identifying optimal doses and combination with other treatment modalities.

These developments represent initial recognitions of the issues raised by the Network and echo the intense advocacy efforts it conducted in 2020 to build strong support around its mission and vision.



## Looking forward to 2021:

- Further develop its strategy to bring the optimisation of health systems and treatments in cancer to the top of the European health agenda
- Publish an advocacy document outlining key immediate asks of the Network to achieve its aims

Visual from the Virtual European Cancer Summit 2020: Row 1 - Yolande Lievens (European Cancer Organisation's Health Systems and Treatment Optimisation Network); Lydie Meheus (Anticancer Fund); Bengt Jönsson (Stockholm School of Economics). Row 2 - Denis Lacombe (European Cancer Organisation's Health Systems and Treatment Optimisation Network); Jan Geissler (EU Cancer Mission Board; European Cancer Organisation's Patient Advisory Committee); Benjamin Besse (Institut Gustave Roussy). Row 3 - Bartosz Arłukowicz MEP (European Parliament's Special Committee for Beating Cancer).



## | CONVENING THE CANCER COMMUNITY

# Quality Cancer Care Network

### Co-Chairs



**Philip Poortmans**  
EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR  
RADIOTHERAPY AND ONCOLOGY



**Simon Oberst**  
ORGANISATION OF EUROPEAN  
CANCER INSTITUTES

### The [Quality Cancer Care Network](#) aims to:

- Improve outcomes for cancer patients in Europe through the adoption and the implementation of essential requirements for quality cancer care in Europe
- Complement existing clinical guidelines and improve their efficacy
- Shape the policy environment at European and national levels to improve quality of cancer care across Europe and decrease inequalities in cancer outcomes

Launched in September 2020 with Stella Kyriakides, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, the [European Code of Cancer Practice](#) sets out a series of **10 key overarching rights** and signposts what patients should expect from their health system in order for them to achieve the best possible outcomes. The Code is available in over 25 languages.

The [European Quality Cancer Care Catalogue](#), launched at the [European Cancer Summit 2020](#), provides a central repository to guide individuals to the tools they will find helpful in improving the quality of cancer care.

Three [Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care](#) papers were published in 2020:

- Elaborating the Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care: **Prostate Cancer**  
Launch event held in June 2020
- Advancing Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care: **Breast Cancer**  
Launch event held in June 2020
- Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care: **Lung Cancer**  
Launch event held in December 2020



A dedicated section on quality of cancer care was included in **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**. This incorporates an EU Network of national Comprehensive Cancer Centres, the goal of a 90% access of eligible patients, as well as the setup of a network of Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructures within and across all Member States.

### Looking forward to 2021:

- Publication of Essential Requirements: Pancreatic and Adult Glioma
- Revision of 2017 Essential Requirements: Colorectal and Sarcoma
- Developing new Essential Requirements

Visual: Stella Kyriakides (EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety) in conversation with Matti Aapro (President, European Cancer Organisation) at the launch of the European Code of Cancer Practice.

# European Code of Cancer Practice

## YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:



1. EQUAL ACCESS



2. INFORMATION



3. QUALITY,  
EXPERTISE &  
OUTCOMES



4. SPECIALISED  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY  
CARE



5. SHARED  
DECISION-MAKING



6. RESEARCH &  
INNOVATION



7. QUALITY OF LIFE



8. INTEGRATED  
SUPPORTIVE &  
PALLIATIVE CARE



9. SURVIVORSHIP &  
REHABILITATION



10. REINTEGRATION



#cancerpatientrights #codeofcancerpractice

[europeancancer.org/code](http://europeancancer.org/code)



## | CONVENING THE CANCER COMMUNITY

# Survivorship and Quality of Life Network



### Co-Chairs



**Andrew Davies**

MULTINATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SUPPORTIVE CARE IN CANCER



**Csaba Dégi**

INTERNATIONAL PSYCHO-ONCOLOGY SOCIETY

The **Survivorship and Quality of Life Network** brings together patients, healthcare professionals, academics, charities and foundations and our **Community 365** to highlight and promote opportunities for pan European improvement in the way health systems and society takes care of the survivorship and quality of life challenges faced by cancer patients, their carers, partners and families.

We classify these challenges in two main ways:

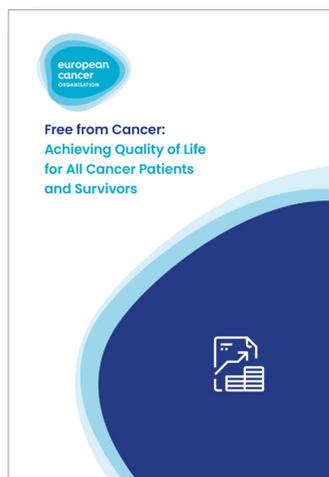
- Physical needs
- Psycho-social needs

In **2020**, at a dedicated [session of the European Cancer Summit 2020](#), the Network launched a **new Action Report**:

### **Free from Cancer: Achieving Quality of Life for All Cancer Patients and Survivors**

*“Now is the time for European health systems to improve their readiness for the present and future realities of increased cancer survivorship”*

**Action Report launched in November 2020**



A dedicated pillar on quality of life of cancer patients, survivors and carers was included in **Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan**, with specific provisions on Return to Work, Right to Be Forgotten and access to follow-up care. It echoes the Network’s calls for a holistic approach of cancer survivorship and quality of life, addressing all the needs of cancer patients and survivors.

### Looking forward to 2021:

- Further engaging with EU institutions to play a major role in the implementation phase of the Beating Cancer Plan and promoting uptake of recommendations included in the ‘Free From Cancer’ Action Report
- Initiating work within its workstreams to respond to relevant opportunities

Visual from the Virtual European Cancer Summit 2020: Row 1 - Andrew Davies (European Cancer Organisation’s Survivorship and Quality of Life Network); Anja Mehnert (University Medical Center Leipzig); Sarunas Narbutas (Youth Cancer Europe), Row 2 - Csaba Dégi (European Cancer Organisation’s Survivorship and Quality of Life Network); Alexander Zehnder (Sanofi); Dolores Montserrat MEP (European Parliament’s Special Committee on Cancer). Row 3 - Françoise Meunier (Federation of European Academies of Medicine).



# Digital Health Network



## Co-Chairs



Wim Oyen

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF  
NUCLEAR MEDICINE



Regina Beets-Tan

EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF  
RADIOLOGY

Among key issues raised by our [Digital Health Network](#) members, and on which we wish to give focus to are:

- Defining and promoting **research needs** in the use of digital technology in cancer care
- Promoting approved **education** opportunities for professionals in cancer care to better deploy digital technology in their daily practice
- Identifying and responding to relevant **policy initiatives** at the EU level on Digital Health topics, including in respect to debates and opportunities concerning the **use of data** in improving cancer care e.g. European Health Data Space, European Cancer Patient Digital Centre

The Digital Health [session at the European Cancer Summit](#) was a dynamic multi-stakeholder conversation about the challenges and opportunities for Cancer Care associated with both current technological trends and EU initiatives.

A strong appetite for joint working between stakeholders on topics such as the European Health Data Space and the European Cancer Patient Digital Centre emerged.

As a result, the Network will convene consensus positioning by the Cancer Community on these topics during 2021.

The proposed **EU Cancer Mission** includes the European Cancer Patient Digital Centre. The European Cancer Imaging Initiative (access to cancer imaging data) as well as the inter-specialty training programme have been included in **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**.

## Looking forward to 2021:

- Leading representations by the Cancer Community on the European Health Data Space
- Engaging with the European Commission and European Parliament on related topics to digital healthcare
- Following and responding to Artificial Intelligence and the progress of telemedicine
- Responding to Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and EU Cancer Mission



# Inequalities Network



## Co-Chairs



**Nicolò Matteo Luca Battisti**  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF GERIATRIC ONCOLOGY



**Hendrik Van Poppel**  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF UROLOGY

## The **Inequalities Network** aims to:

- Help shine a spotlight on the readily available policy mechanism to bridge gaps and raise standards and outcomes in cancer care across all of Europe, for all groups in society
- Build strongly on the existing work of Network members
- Liaise closely with the EU institutions and others in providing advice and recommendations

Immediate priorities for the Network have been identified as workstreams on the following Inequalities:

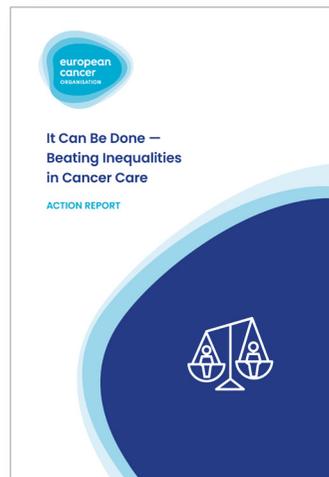
- East-West Divide; Gender; Age; Ethnicity; Health Literacy and Patient Education

In **2020**, at a [dedicated session of the European Cancer Summit 2020](#), the Network passed a [resolution](#) on inequalities in cancer care and launched a new **Action Report**:

### ***It Can Be Done – Beating Inequalities in Cancer Care***

The Network suggested a strong focus on **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan** Cancer Inequalities Registry and overall priority to fight cancer inequalities.

**Action Report launched in November 2020**



## Looking forward to 2021:

- Responding to the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, with a special focus on the Cancer Inequalities Registry
- Bringing the attention of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA) to inequality issues
- Developing working plans for each workstream

Visual from the Virtual European Cancer Summit 2020: Row 1 - Kateřina Konečná MEP (European Parliament's Special Committee for Beating Cancer); Nicolò Battisti (European Cancer Organisation's Inequalities Network); Robert Greene (European Cancer Organisation's Patient Advisory Committee). Row 2 - Hendrik Van Poppel (European Cancer Organisation's Inequalities Network); Richard Sullivan (Journal of Cancer Policy; Institute of Cancer Policy, King's College London); Katie Reeder-Hayes (American Society of Clinical Oncology). Row 3 - Lori J. Pierce (American Society of Clinical Oncology); Masum Hossain (Pfizer).



## Workforce Network

### Co-Chairs



**Andreas Charalambous**  
EUROPEAN ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY



**Geerard Beets**  
EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF SURGICAL ONCOLOGY



**Mirjam Crul**  
EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF ONCOLOGY PHARMACY

**Cancer control is simply not possible without the cancer workforce. The Workforce Network brings together** professionals, patients and others to speak as one about these unaddressed policy needs at the European level and ensure that the right of every cancer patient to specialised multidisciplinary cancer care is upheld and made a reality.

Working together, our Network aims to help:

- Address workforce shortages in cancer care
- Improve opportunities for professional qualification recognition and mobility in the cancer field
- Ensure cancer professionals' safety and well-being
- Elevate cancer education, training and development opportunities

The [European Cancer Summit 2020 included a session](#) on "Preparing a Resilient Oncology Workforce for the Present and Future". The session was a high-level exchange with leading policy-makers from the European Commission and the European Parliament, and top experts from stakeholder organisations, on ways to achieve concrete progress in key areas of need identified by the Network.

A consensus [resolution](#) was passed, highlighting the importance of supporting harmonisation and recognition of cancer professional qualifications through adequate tools at the European level.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan states that: "*High-quality cancer care depends on a high-quality workforce*". Supporting this recognition, it includes:

- The creation of a new Inter-specialty cancer training programme, aimed at addressing current skill gaps across the cancer pathway
- A target of access of 90% eligible patients by 2030 to recognised national Comprehensive Cancer Centres

Additional provisions, such as the new Cancer Inequalities Registry and the promised update of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive, are also seen as promising opportunities to further advance the Network's key asks.



### Looking forward to 2021:

- Developing and publishing an advocacy document providing policy recommendations on the four priorities of the Network
- Bringing the attention of the European Parliament's Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA) to workforce issues
- Promoting the [Accreditation Council of Oncology in Europe \(ACOE\)](#) that provides accreditation to Continuing Medical Education (CME) providers

Visual from the Virtual European Cancer Summit 2020: Row 1 - Andreas Charalambous (European Cancer Organisation's Workforce Network); Geerard Beets (European Cancer Organisation's Workforce Network); Alexandru Eniu (College of the European School of Oncology). Row 2 - Lynda Wyld (Surgical Oncology at the University of Sheffield); Mirjam Crul (European Cancer Organisation's Workforce Network); Kathi Apostolidis (European Cancer Patient Coalition). Row 3 - Nicolás González Casares MEP; Nicolas Schmit (European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).

85 Speakers, over 500 Delegates and  
12 Sessions with Relevance and Impact

# Working Together Against Cancer: Breaking Down Barriers & Saving Lives

Virtual Edition



# Summit 2020

The virtual [European Cancer Summit 2020](#) on 18 & 19 November brought together leading oncology experts, patient advocates, politicians and policy-makers to discuss the main issues impacting cancer policy, for the benefit of cancer patients, healthcare professionals and all people across Europe.



## View the Session Recordings

- [Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer](#)
- [Health Systems and Treatment Optimisation](#)
- [How to Implement Quality Cancer Care in Europe](#)
- [Inequalities: Disparities and Discrimination in Cancer Care](#)
- [Early Detection Saves Lives](#)
- [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#)
- [Mission-Driven Cancer Research](#)
- [Cancer Survivorship – The Physical and Psycho-Social Legacies](#)
- [Preparing a Resilient Oncology Workforce for the Present and Future](#)
- [Viral Protection: Achieving the Possible](#)
- [The Digital Transformation of Cancer Care](#)
- [Cancer Issues Worldwide](#)

## View the Highlights Video



- [Read the Report](#)
- [Consult the Resolutions](#)



# New Visual Identity, Website & Secure Area

## European Cancer Organisation (E.C.O.)

During the year we launched new:

### Logo

New brand identity launched in May 2020



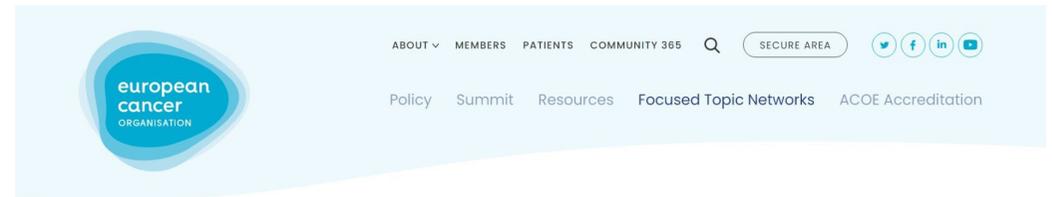
### Badges

Dedicated badges for our Member Societies, Patient Advocacy Groups and Community 365 launched in May 2020



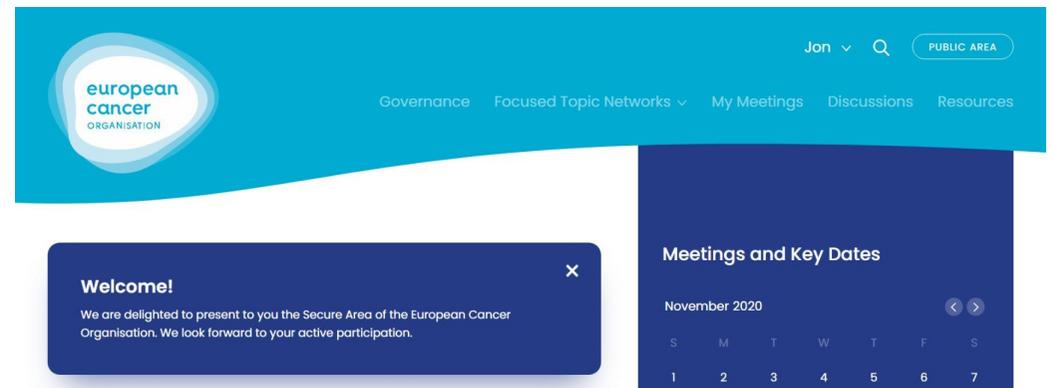
## Website

Website focused on delivery of our Strategy launched in May 2020



## Secure Area

A restricted area for our community launched in October 2020



## ACOE Accreditation

The Accreditation Council of Oncology in Europe (ACOE) provides accreditation to Continuing Medical Education (CME) providers for the benefit of participants receiving education in oncology.

Since November 2020, ACOE Distance Learning Project provides accreditation for hybrid physical/virtual educational events, online educational events, webinars, presentations, e-learning material, webcasts and blended learning.

- **The Project offers our Member Societies and other oncology education providers a more simple and flexible approach to Distance Learning accreditation**
- **50% discount to all Member Societies of the European Cancer Organisation as a benefit of membership and support**

We have already received many Distance Learning accreditation applications and we are looking forward to working with many of you.

**ACOE**  
ACCREDITATION  
BY EUROPEAN CANCER  
ORGANISATION

**New brand and website launched in November 2020**

**[acoe.europeancancer.org](https://acoe.europeancancer.org)**



# New Endorsement Decision-Making Process

The new approach enables the European Cancer Organisation to be fast and effective in reviewing endorsement requests



**Lore Decoster** is the European Cancer Organisation Board Member appointed as responsible for [Endorsement](#)

## Board of Directors

In January 2020, Dr Matti Aapro became President of the European Cancer Organisation. Our Board provides expertise and oversight from a diverse range of disciplines and professions within the European cancer community.

In particular, they play a leading role in the implementation of our Strategy 2020-2023 and are key decision-makers in the approval process for new policies adopted by the European Cancer Organisation. Our Board meets every quarter and governs E.C.O. in accordance with the mandate given to it by the General Assembly and as articulated in the [Statutes](#).

The General Assembly with representatives of all our Member Societies is the highest governing body of our organisation and meets formally twice every year.

We thank Prof. Philip Poortmans, E.C.O. Past President, for his leadership, guidance and commitment over the past four years and welcome Prof. Andreas Charalambous as the E.C.O. President-Elect.

The next election for the Board of Directors will take place at the General Assembly on 16 November 2021.



**Matti Aapro**  
PRESIDENT



**Philip Poortmans**  
PAST PRESIDENT



**Wim Oyen**  
TREASURER



**Regina Beets-Tan**



**Isabel Teresa Rubio**



**Sema Erdem**  
CO-CHAIR, PATIENT ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE



**Stefan Gijssels**  
CO-CHAIR, PATIENT ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE



**Alberto Costa**



**Mirjam Crul**



**Dominique de Valeriola**



**Lore Decoster**



**Csaba Dégi**



**Jan van Meerbeeck**



**Arnulf Stenzl**



**Bertrand Tombal**



**Theresa Wiseman**



**Mark Lawler**  
EUROPEAN CODE OF  
PRACTICE PROJECT CO-CHAIR  
(EX-OFFICIO)



**Mike Morrissey**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EX-OFFICIO)



# Member Societies

During 2020, our 31 Member Societies provided expertise in their discipline or profession in cancer





# Patient Advisory Committee

Patient Advocates are at the heart of the European Cancer Organisation, with 20 patient advocacy groups



The Patient Advisory Committee is involved in all policy-making and activities, including the Focused Topic Networks

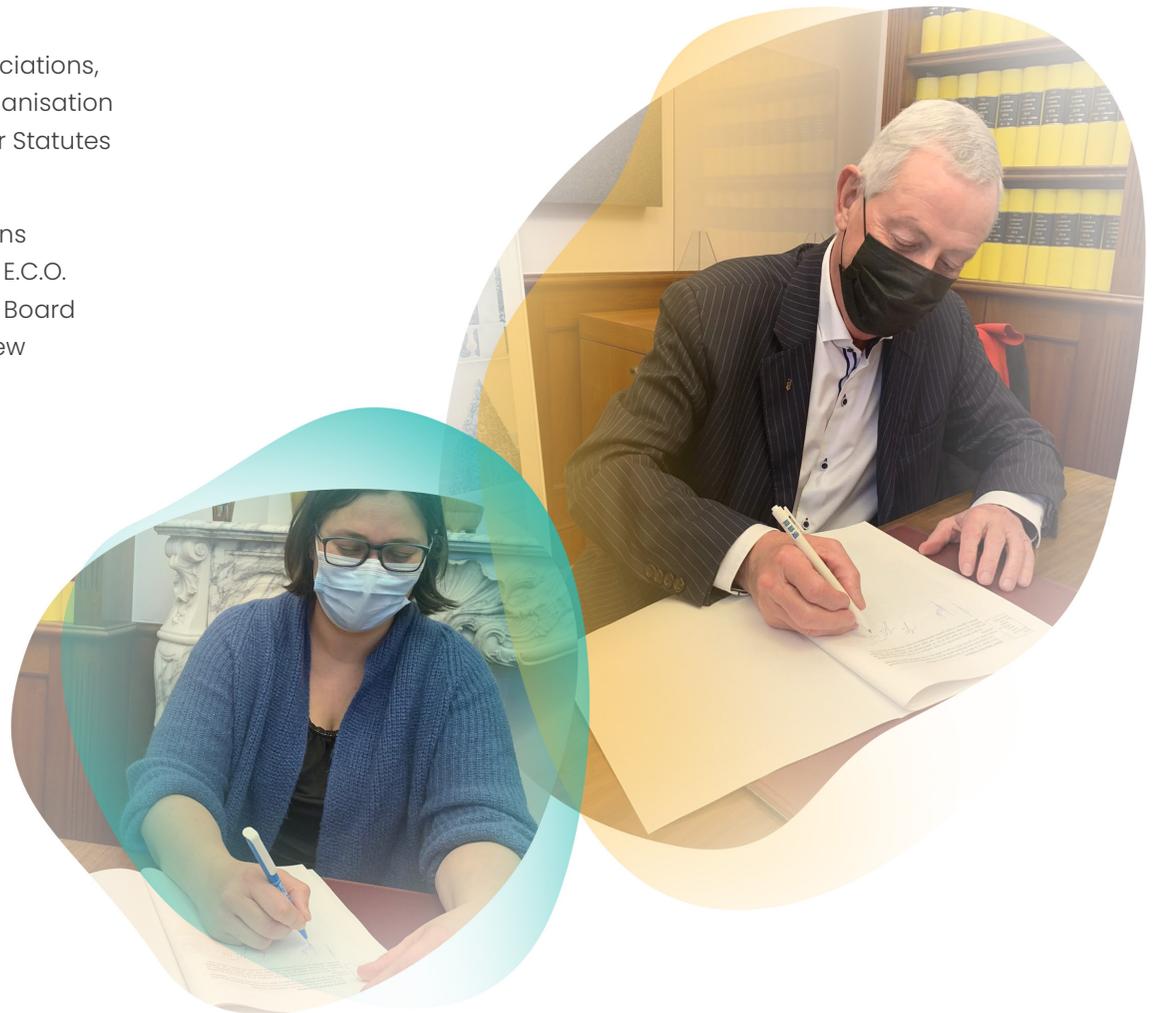
## Revised Statutes

To comply with the new Code for Belgian non-profit associations, introduced at the start of 2020, the European Cancer Organisation set up a Governance Review to include the revision of our Statutes with a full consultation of our Member Societies.

The revised Statutes now include the concept of affiliations and collaboration agreements in addition to the existing E.C.O. membership which remains unchanged. The concept of Board “delegates” was also removed, in compliance with the new Code.

The new Statutes were agreed in principle at the General Assembly on 17 November 2020 and formalised with the Belgian notary on 29 January 2021.

We thank Prof Hein Van Poppel (EAU) and Dr Lore Decoster (SIOG) for their availability to join the meeting in person and sign the deed on behalf of the voting Member Societies.



## Our Broad Coalition of Support

At the start of 2020, we launched [Community 365](#). This is a broad group of charity, philanthropy and industry contributors to the Focused Topic Networks of the European Cancer Organisation. It replaces the previous model of healthcare industry sponsorship of events.

Community 365 provide ideas, guidance, practical support and resources for our work in convening stakeholders and building consensus in the European cancer community. Community 365 contributors do not have a decision-making role in our policy work.

Policies of the European Cancer Organisation are agreed by our Board after consultation with our Member Societies and Patient Advisory Committee.

Community 365 also has additional not-for-profit organisations as Supporters of our Mission & Vision, Strategy and Focused Topic Networks.

For more information about the organisations contributing to, and supporting, Community 365, please [visit our website here](#).

The first **Community 365 Roundtable Meeting on Inequalities**, held in October 2020, focused on the East-West Divide and Treating Ageing Patients with Cancer, brought together leading policy-makers, politicians, oncology experts and patient advocates to discuss these two important topics in the months before Europe's Beating Cancer Plan was launched.

The second **Community 365 Roundtable Meeting on Lung Cancer**, held in December 2020, brought together leading policy-makers, politicians, oncology experts and patient advocates to launch the [Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care: Lung Cancer](#) and to discuss this important topic.

If you or your organisation would like to become a Community 365 Contributor or Supporter, please email our Development Consultant, [Julie Fitzsimmins](#). We look forward to hearing from you!

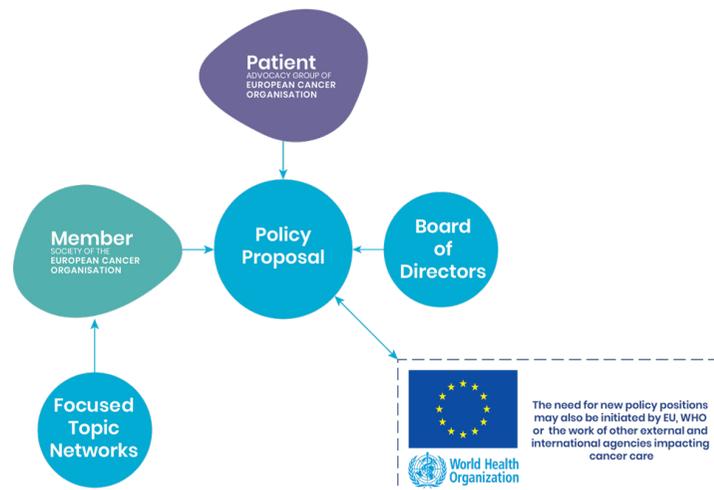


# Policy Decision Making Process

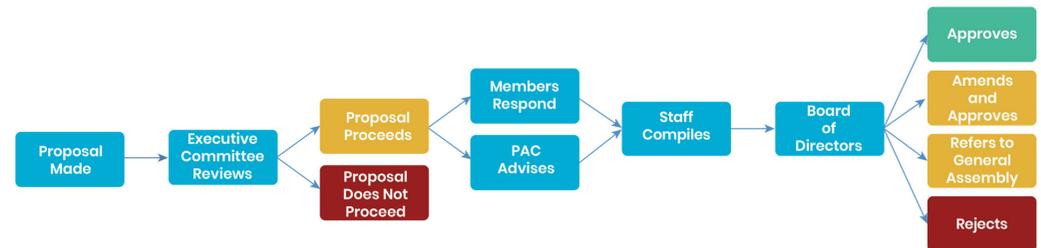
When [agreeing policy within the European Cancer Organisation](#), our paramount principles are:

- All [Member Societies](#) should be consulted during the process, with decisions made by [our Board](#) elected by Member Societies. This ensures we receive input from all the disciplines and professionals represented in our membership.
- The [Patient Advisory Committee](#) (PAC) also provides expertise, experience and advice throughout the process.

## Origin of Policy of the European Cancer Organisation



## Process of Policy Decision-Making



This approach enables the European Cancer Organisation to be fast, effective and nimble in reviewing policy requests while also providing opportunity for input by all Member Societies on an equal basis.

## 2020: A Year of Engagement and Teamwork

When I joined the team as Chief Executive in July 2019, I was particularly impressed by the sheer enthusiasm and dedication of our [Member Societies](#) and [Patient Advisory Committee](#) (PAC), even during difficult times. Our Organisation relies on the experts who volunteer their time for the delivery of our [Mission](#) and, at the point when we needed to re-focus and re-energise, we were especially grateful for their commitment in agreeing the new Strategy 2020–2023 at our General Assembly at the end of 2019.

The elements of our new Strategy had been discussed among the whole community in the previous months and, as the facilitator of that project, I was very grateful for the constructive advice and support of many volunteers and staff in our family of organisations.

There were two main pillars identified. Building consensus on policy issues within our community of oncology experts and patient advocates, and then building our collective influence for those policies to be delivered was very important, not least in the year of consultation on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the EU Cancer Mission.

The second pillar saw the launch of our new [Focused Topic Networks](#) that have provided common angles through which our Member Societies, PAC and other stakeholders can work together and tackle specific issues that have been chosen by our Members. We stand ready to amplify the work of our Member Societies and PAC, facilitating their commendable efforts to reach broader stakeholder groups and have more impact.

I am a great believer that membership organisations work most effectively where there is a true partnership between the volunteer leaders and the staff team. I also believe in the power of positive energy and working within a culture of dynamism, good humour and trust – especially when we are working on something as important as cancer. I would like to thank Matti, Philip, Sema, Stefan, all of the Board and PAC members, the co-chairs of our new Focused Topic Networks, and everyone who has participated in our activities for working so collaboratively and constructively.

It has not been possible to include the photos and names of all our many volunteer colleagues in this review of 2020, but please know that your contribution is much appreciated and valued. And I am very proud of our team in Brussels who have worked tirelessly to deliver our work. Thanks very much to Richard, Agnese, Eric, Nela, Norbert, Maryna, Giacomo and Alberto for their energy and enthusiasm.

This was only the first year in what I hope to be a long collaborative journey. We have much more to build together to continue implementing the Strategy we have created. All of your ideas and suggestions are welcome at all times! Let's bring this to fruition as a joint force for good.

**Mike Morrissey** Chief Executive  
[mike.morrissey@europeanancer.org](mailto:mike.morrissey@europeanancer.org)





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