



CONSULTATION: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – reinforced mandate

RESPONSE FROM THE EUROPEAN CANCER ORGANISATION (27 January 2021)

Our support for the reinforced mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

The European Cancer Organisation supports the Commission's proposal to reinforce the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Agency has proved the value of its role in areas such as rapid information collection and sharing, guidance and advice. The near real time sharing of such data has been especially commendable and should serve as exemplar for other EU data initiatives in the field of health.

The potential of monitoring and its relevancy to cancer & health promotion

Specific proposals, such as a new vaccine monitoring platform hosted jointly by the European Medicines Agency and ECDC, and monitoring and assessing health systems capacity and identifying population groups at risk and in need of targeted prevention and response measures, are welcomed. Relevance to cancer from both proposals is identified. ECDC has provided meaningful support to countries in the shared ambition of eliminating HPV associated cancers as a public health problem via their monitoring and guidance functions and this should be built upon. A clearer role for the ECDC in helping countries to protect at risk groups during pandemics, such as cancer patients, is encouraged.

However, we find the proposal limited in the sense that a strong case exists for the mandate of the ECDC to be opened beyond only providing assistance on communicable disease. The powerful epidemiological surveillance systems and architecture has the potential for significant benefit if also applied to the areas of non communicable disease. The 2019 independent evaluation of ECDC highlighted the support from a wide range of stakeholders for the extension of the ECDC's, particularly in the areas of health promotion, information & monitoring, and health determinants. The European Parliament has also asked that ECDC be empowered to tackle the gaps in chronic disease epidemiology.



Non communicable disease data collection

We also raise the attention of the European Commission the public declaration of support for ECDC's remit to include roles in non communicable disease data collection published by the European Chronic Disease Alliance last year. It emphasises, for example, the interlinkage between communicable and non communicable disease impacts, as has been demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We therefore urge the legal proposal updating the ECDC mandate include wording to better enable the Agency to conduct activity in areas related to non communicable disease. The silos, in this respect, should be broken down.