

Brussels, 14/07/21

Open letter

To:

Chair, Vice-Chairs, Coordinators, Rapporteur & Shadow-Rapporteurs, and Members of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA)

Increasing the early diagnosis of lung cancer in Europe: an essential milestone to tackle the biggest cancer killer

Dear MEPs,

The European Respiratory Society (ERS), together with the undersigned 27 organisations, urges you to take into account the importance of lung cancer early diagnosis in achieving the goals of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan while discussing the draft report which will be presented tomorrow in the BECA Committee.

We have followed the successive BECA hearings with great attention and fully agree with the dedicated session on lung cancer early detection which stressed that lung cancer screening programmes reduce mortality. Lung cancer is currently the biggest cancer killer in Europe and results in immense suffering for many European citizens, as the disease is often diagnosed at a late stage.

Despite new diagnostic techniques and many scientific advances, for example in identifying genetic alterations and developing more targeted therapies, we are not sufficiently improving the rates of early diagnosis in Europe. The Beating Cancer Plan rightfully places the emphasis on early detection and its importance in saving lives but it misses clear objectives to make a tangible impact on people at risk of, and living with lung cancer. We therefore propose to include the following target in the BECA report: **to increase the early diagnosis of lung cancer by 20% by 2030.**

To achieve this ambitious yet realistic goal, we deem it essential to urge the Commission to:

- 1) Extend the Council recommendations on cancer screening to lung cancer by 2022,
- 2) Support projects, for example via EU4health, the Cancer Mission or other relevant programmes to explore the barriers limiting the early detection and early diagnosis of the deadliest cancers in Europe,
- 3) Put forward a Union-wide awareness campaign to boost efforts to improve public awareness of the importance of early detection of cancer, enhance early diagnosis and increase survivorship,
- 4) Connect the wealth of expertise in Europe via cross border collaborations such as multidisciplinary centers of excellence.

It is time for Europe, now more than ever, to act and lead the way on lung cancer early diagnosis. **We ask your support in including these recommendations in the BECA report.** This would send a strong signal on the crucial importance of early diagnosis in lung cancer prevention and treatment but also of your commitment to reduce the burden of the biggest cancer killer in Europe.

We thank you for your consideration and remain at your disposal should you have any question.

Kind regards,

The European Respiratory Society, supported by the undersigned 27 organisations:

All.Can International

Associazione Insieme per i Pazienti di Oncologia Polmonare – Italian Association of Lung Cancer Patients (IPOP)

Cancer Research UK

De l’Air! – French Lung Cancer Patient’s Association

Društvo Onkoloških Bolnikov Slovenije – Cancer Patient’s Association of Slovenia

European Association for Cancer Research (EACR)

European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC)

European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA)

European Lung Foundation (ELF)

European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP)

European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC)

European School of Oncology (ESO)

European Society for Radiology (ESR)

European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM)

European Society of Oncology Imaging (ESOI)

European Society of Surgical Oncology (ESSO)

Fair Life Lung Cancer Care

Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori Milan – National Cancer Institute of Milan

Irish Cancer Society

KWF Kankerbestrijding - Dutch Cancer Society (KWF)

Longkanker Nederland – Dutch Lung Cancer Society

Lung Cancer Europe (LuCE)

Organisation of European Cancer Institutes (OECI)

Pulmonale Associação Portuguesa de Luta Contra o Cancro do Pulmão –
Portuguese Association for the Fight Against Lung Cancer

Société de Pneumologie de Langue Française – French-Speaking Respiratory
Society (SPLF)

The Cyprus Anti-Cancer Society

Women Against Lung Cancer in Europe (WALCE)

Logos:



