

Call to action

United against lung cancer



Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the European Union, accounting for approximately 20% of all cancer deaths across the region¹. However, despite its burden, it has not received the level of attention warranted in the implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

Recent global developments, including the adoption of the World Health Assembly Resolution on promoting and prioritizing an integrated lung health approach in May 2025, as well as the 2023 Consensus Statement on Bridging the Gap in the Diagnosis and Management of Lung Cancer, provide promising momentum. These milestones should serve as a catalyst for renewed and coordinated action in Europe.

Progress has been made, such as the inclusion of lung cancer in the revised Council Recommendation on cancer screening, adopted in December 2022. Looking ahead, the ongoing implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the Cancer Mission present an

unprecedented opportunity to transform lung cancer care, and care for other related cancers, including rare thoracic cancers. These initiatives can reduce disparities in outcomes through the systematic measurement of treatment rates and by advancing access to care across the full continuum: from prevention and early detection, to diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship.

Several years into the Beating Cancer Plan's implementation, and with most of its actions due to take place by 2027, this is a critical juncture: political momentum must not only be preserved but intensified, to change the course of cancer in Europe. The current Beating Cancer Plan is only the starting point.

We urge the following measures to be implemented:

1. Improving Prevention, Ensuring Earlier Diagnosis, and Driving Health Literacy

Early diagnosis and screening significantly influence treatment timing and outcomes. We urge:

European Commission and Member States

- To fully implement and expand prevention measures outlined in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan—including actions on tobacco control and air pollution (e.g., radon and asbestos)—and to deliver on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control commitments, without further delay.
- To boost awareness of lung cancer among the general population and primary care providers through coherent, system-wide strategies, aligned with the Consensus Statement on Bridging the Gap in the Diagnosis and Management of Lung Cancer.
- To integrate insights from the LUCIA project on risk factors for lung cancer into literacy and awareness campaigns at both EU and national levels.

European Commission

- To publish and implement the revised European Code Against Cancer, empowering citizens to manage cancer risk factors and participate in screening—particularly for lung cancer, as per the updated Council Recommendation.
- To launch an initiative developing European Guidelines and Quality Assurance schemes for lung cancer, modeled on breast and colorectal cancer programmes, and informed by the SOLACE project screening guidelines. These must be applied at national level.

Member States

To Implement the revised Council Recommendation on lung cancer screening, addressing geographic inequities.

Civil society

To establish lung cancer-specific patient groups in all Member States, ensuring representation and tailored support, particularly for those affected by rare thoracic cancers.



2. Ensuring faster patient access to modern diagnostic tests and treatments

The treatment of lung cancer has shifted from a one-size-fits-all approach to personalized treatment. However, state-of-the-art lung cancer medicines require prior diagnostic testing. We urge:

European Commission and Member States

To support the training and availability of specialized and dedicated nurses to guide lung and rare thoracic cancer patients through the treatment process and provide physical and psychological support.

European Commission

- To encourage **Member States** to fully leverage the outcomes of the 'Cancer Diagnostic and Treatment for All' initiative to improve access and reimbursement to comprehensive genomic profiling through next-generation sequencing (NGS) technology as well as PD-L1 testing.
- To continue and expand the Inter-specialty cancer training programme to support interdisciplinary collaboration among lung cancer healthcare professionals, such as pulmonologists and medical oncologists.
- To include in the European Guidelines a drug treatment rate² target for advanced non-small cell lung cancer of 75%, as indicated through the benchmark based on guidelines by the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)³.

- To facilitate funding for multi-country clinical trials for lung cancer patients with rare mutations and for rare thoracic cancer patients as part of its efforts under the 2025 Life Sciences Strategy.

Member States

- To establish Rapid Care Pathways to guide the movement and referral of lung and rare thoracic cancer patients between primary, secondary and tertiary care.
- To improve access to modern and effective lung cancer medicines by expediting reimbursement approval and quickly incorporating new treatments into clinical guidelines.
- To work towards greater implementation of cross-border clinical trials for lung cancer patients with rare mutations and for rare thoracic cancer patients, and support access to highly specialized centers from the EURACAN European Reference Network

² 'Drug treatment rate' is defined as the ratio of the number of patients treated with systemic therapy and the number of potentially eligible patients for such systemic therapy in Hofmarcher T, Lindgren P, Wilking N. Diagnosed but not treated: How to improve patient access to advanced NSCLC treatment in Europe. IHE Report 2022:2. IHE: Lund, Sweden.

³ Planchard D, Popat S, Kerr K, Novello S, Smit EF, Faivre-Finn C, et al. Metastatic non-small cell lung cancer: ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up (update 15 September 2020). Ann Oncol. 2018;29(Suppl 4):iv192-iv237.

3. Enhancing data collection on treatment rates and their inclusion in the Cancer Inequalities Registry

Ensuring and coordinating European action on cancer care requires reliable and relevant data to guide initiatives and drive patient outcomes. We urge:

European Commission and Member States

To identify together best practices for data collection, storing and processing of treatment rates through the establishment and expansion of robust regional and national cancer information systems across the European Union.

European Commission

- To include drug treatment rates for lung cancer in the Cancer Inequalities Registry.
- To include time to treatment (following diagnosis) as a key performance indicator for Member States, included in the Cancer Inequalities Registry.

- To encourage **Member States** to meet the targets included in the 2023 Quality Indicators for Lung Cancer to monitor and improve oncological care within Comprehensive Cancer Care Networks.

Member States

To act with commitment and ambition on country-specific assessments on disparities in cancer care identified through the Cancer Inequalities Registry and latest country reports from February 2025.





We call on:

Members of the European Parliament

To advocate for an update of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, setting new and ambitious targets on prevention, screening, early diagnosis and treatment, particularly for lung cancer, as part of the SANT Committee's own-initiative report on the Plan's implementation.

The European Commission

To revise Europe's Beating Cancer Plan in line with the asks of the European cancer community by:

- Introducing concrete, measurable targets on prevention, screening, early diagnosis and treatment for national implementation
- Creating strong links with any forthcoming Cardiovascular Health Plan
- Reflecting key scientific and policy developments since 2019

To support Member States in developing integrated national policies for lung health, in alignment with the 2025 WHA Resolution on promoting and prioritizing an integrated lung health approach

EU Member States

- To continue ambitious implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, including enacting the updated Council Recommendation on cancer screening
- To push for further EU-level action on cancer prevention, diagnosis, and care
- To put in place National Cancer Control Plans which include specific targets on lung cancer

Future EU Council Presidencies

To keep cancer at the top of the political agenda, including by setting and promoting targets for early diagnosis and treatment as outlined in this Call to Action

For further information on this Call to Action, please contact info@lungcancereurope.eu