



# Optimising EU Investment in Cancer Research

**A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK  
FOR BETTER IMPACT**





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## Thank you to all who have responded to the Green Paper so far.

ECO would like to thank all stakeholders who have replied to share their views so far on the issues raised within this Green Paper. In 2026, all responses received will help to inform a future White Paper consolidating a shared expression on future means to optimise EU investment in cancer.

In the meantime all stakeholders remain warmly invited to continue inputting to the consultation via the ECO website: <https://www.europeancancer.org/green-paper-cancer-research.html>

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## Foreword

**BY PROFESSOR CHRISTINE CHOMIENNE**  
**CHAIR OF THE ECO RESEARCH POLICY NETWORK**



Europe stands at a defining moment in its fight against cancer. In recent years, landmark initiatives such as Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the EU Mission on Cancer have laid a strong and enduring foundation for progress. Together, they have demonstrated what is possible when European ambition is matched by collective action, shared purpose, and cross-border collaboration.

As we look ahead to the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework, the time has come to build upon these achievements and shape a more effective, more equitable, and more impactful future for cancer research in Europe. This Green Paper, prepared by the Research Policy Network of the European Cancer Organisation, is intended to spark reflection, discussion, and engagement. It calls upon all actors, researchers, clinicians, policymakers, patients, and citizens alike, to contribute their expertise and vision towards a shared goal: achieving the highest possible performance of EU cancer research.

Our ambition is clear. We strive for a Europe that leads the world in research excellence, where investment in science is recognised as investment in people, and where discoveries translate swiftly into better outcomes for patients. We envision a Europe that acts decisively to address inequalities, empower citizens, and unlock the full potential of

collaboration across its regions, countries, and people.

A competitive Europe must be one that innovates. A secure Europe must be one that unites. By strengthening governance, modernising regulation, and deepening cooperation, we can accelerate research, enhance our health systems governance, and ensure that the promise of recent efforts and developments continues to deliver for generations to come.

We invite you, our valued partners and stakeholders, to share your insights, ideas, and experience. Your perspectives will guide the recommendations that Europe's decision-makers need. Together, through ambition, coordination, and trust, we can shape the next chapter of European cancer research and secure a healthier future for all.

# Introduction



EU cancer research policy is at an inflection point. Four years into the delivery of the landmark Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the EU Research Mission on Cancer, decisions on the continuity and direction of future EU cooperation on combatting cancer lie ahead. A new European Commission has taken office after the 2024 European Parliament elections, with pledged commitments to macro themes such as 'Competitiveness' and 'European security', guided by informative reports such as those recently led by Mario Draghi, Manuel Heitor, and Enrico Letta, leaders of three reports from the European Commission focused on the EU's competitiveness and the Single Market. Ongoing discussions on the next seven-year EU budget to commence in 2028, known as "the multiannual financial framework", are reflecting this landscape.

It is in this context that the Research Policy Network of the European Cancer Organisation (ECO), chaired by Professor Christine Chomienne, has identified a need to promote debate and discussion on the best forms by which to deliver future high impact cancer research supported by EU funding.

The purpose of this 'Green Paper' is to promote an opportunity for input from stakeholders from across Europe's community of cancer researchers, health professionals, regulators, private partners, charities, patients and patient advocates, carers, interested citizens, and many more. Based on responses received as part of this consultation exercise, a subsequent 'White Paper' is intended. The feedback will be subject to discussion at the European Cancer

Summit 2025, 19–20 November, in Brussels, Belgium.

The premise of the Green Paper is that Europe has achieved many highly significant achievements in cancer research by working together across borders, aided by European Union mechanisms and frameworks for cooperation. However, improvements to how EU-supported cancer research is conducted are achievable. Upscaling this research to meet the standards and principles expected by 2030 will require coordinated input from all relevant actors. This Green Paper makes suggestion on some of these optimisation opportunities.

In order to foster and encourage open debate, respondents are invited to indicate if their input may be made public on the Green Paper consultation website. However, respondents may also indicate if they would prefer their input not to be distributed in this way.

We thank in advance all stakeholders for their time and expertise in formulating fresh recommendations to the decision-makers of the European Union on achieving the best future for cancer research in Europe.

We invite all who have interest in achieving the highest possible performance of EU cancer research to review the following Green Paper and provide your inputs. Responses to the consultation can be received in any format although a questionnaire is provided at the end of the Green Paper to help guide comments.



## ABOUT THE ECO RESEARCH POLICY NETWORK

The Research Policy Network is an initiative of the European Cancer Organisation launched in 2024 to bring together public, academic and private stakeholders from across the cancer community and examine policy needs faced along the cancer research pathway. In doing so, the Network aims to raise awareness that a change of culture is needed and seeks to provide comprehensive and balanced solutions to accelerate cancer research and leverage its benefits to cancer patients and health systems.

Chaired by Prof. Christine Chomienne, Vice-Chair of the EU Cancer Mission Board, the Network has identified a range of needs in the current context:

- **Conveying to policymakers an understanding of the breadth of scientific activities involved in cancer research, and their complementary contributions to the advancement of cancer control.** This includes basic research, translational research, clinical research, implementation research, health services research, social science research, and public health research.
- **Providing a clearer vision of the range of actors involved in the conduct of cancer research in Europe, their interactions and how to improve their collaborations.** This includes academic institutions and researchers, healthcare providers and clinicians, government and public agencies, pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical devices companies, non-governmental organisations and charities, international organisations, patients and patient groups.
- **Outlining key guiding principles to be followed when performing and supporting cancer research in Europe.** This includes the production of validated transparent evidence, balanced attention to all steps of the cancer pathway, citizen centricity, and addressing patients' and public health needs, as well as diversity, equity and inclusion in research, effective use of skills, meaningful collaboration between research disciplines and balanced inclusion of all cancer prevention and care modalities.
- **Addressing key ongoing barriers for the future of cancer research in Europe.** This includes governance, regulatory aspects, data and infrastructure issues, uptake and commercialisation of research outputs, funding and resource allocation, among others.

For the initial set of outputs from this Network, which the present document forms the basis of, a focus will be given to European cancer research governance issues, seen as a potential enabler to rapidly identify and coordinate solutions to other identified barriers.



**Christine Chomienne, Chair of the Network  
and Vice-Chair of the EU Mission on Cancer**



**Nikolina Dodlek, Vice-Chair of the Network  
and member of the ECO Young Cancer Professionals Group**

# 1. Where We Have Come From: A Brief History of EU Involvement in Cancer Research



## 1967–2019. Getting started. Proving concepts and setting new paradigms

Up until the 1960s, the great majority of cancer research in Europe was conducted at the national level through universities, hospitals, and national cancer societies. The foundation of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) in 1967 began to signal a new future in which clinical trials and cancer treatment research could be conducted to a greater extent across countries. Other pan-European scientific societies, such as the European Academy of Cancer Sciences (EACS) and the European Association for Cancer Research (EACR), alongside many professional and clinical associations, also played a formative role in strengthening cross-border collaboration in European cancer research during this time. Such cross-border cancer research partnerships outside of the EU's formal architecture are continuing until today; this section will however focus specifically on mechanisms of European cooperation on cancer research that have been directly enabled or supported by the European Union.

As European convergence and integration grew during the 1980s, the foundation of the **first European Union 'framework programme -FP' for research and technological development** in 1984 marked a significant landmark. The inclusion of support for health and biomedical research efforts cemented the concept that they should be

considered a key, and high value, area of shared investment by the member state governments of the, then, European Community. Continued through the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s, these EU research framework programmes supported capacity-building and pan-European research infrastructures, as well as cross-border research projects. Priorities widened over time for the latter, starting from lab-based research and extending into translational and networked approaches and ultimately large-scale, societal challenge-oriented efforts.

Although not being made a specific priority and being treated under the broader umbrella of health and biomedical research, cancer research benefitted significantly from this new form of European-level research investment:

- Directly, through structuring initiatives, such as the creation of the **TRANSCAN** network of funding organisations from EU-Member States and Associated Countries under the European Research Area, the **EUROCAN** coordination actions and the **CHAIMELEON** pan-European repository of cancer imaging and related clinical data, as well as a wide range of individual research projects on cancer topics funded under the different Frameworks (FPs). This includes the **European Research Council (ERC)**, launched in 2007, and the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)**, launched

in 1996 as Marie Curie Actions and rebranded in 2014 with the launch of Horizon 2020.

- Indirectly, through the set-up of broader infrastructures for health and biomedical research, such as the European research infrastructure for biobanking (**BBMRI-ERIC**) and the network of European research infrastructures for translational medicine (**EATRIS**).

Meanwhile, the launch of the **'Europe Against Cancer'** programme in 1985 represented the first example of specific prioritisation of cancer action by the European Union. Although they belong to the realm of EU health policy, the three successive action plans of this programme, spanning until 2020, also enabled advancement of European cooperation on cancer research, with a focus on epidemiology, prevention, public health and implementation research. Flagship achievements from the programme include the launch of the first **European Code Against Cancer**, the creation of the **European Network of Cancer Registries** and the undertaking of the first **EUROCARE** study on cancer survival in Europe.

The creation of the first EU health framework programme in 2003 represented a crucial milestone in EU health policy action. The integration of the EU research framework programmes within the Multiannual Financial Frameworks from 2007 onwards also created conditions for strengthened alignment between the EU's health and research agendas. This new scenario enabled to a certain extent the continuation of action against cancer commenced under 'Europe Against Cancer', including through the 2003–2008 **'Community Action Plan Against Cancer'**. Flagship EU cancer policy initiatives during this period included the introduction of new European Council Recommendations on cancer screening, support to three EU Joint Actions aimed at strengthening cooperation between Member States (**ePAAC**, **CanCon** and **iPAAC**), the creation of the **European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer (ECIBC)** and the launch of four **European Reference Networks** dedicated to cancer (EURACAN, EuroBloodNet, GENTURIS and PaedCan). 2018 also saw the notable launch of the **1+ Million Genomes** initiative to unlock the potential of genomics in healthcare, including cancer, rare diseases, and infectious diseases.

Such developments have also been supported by

a growing work profile of the EU's Joint Research Centre relevant to cancer, such as regular publication of cancer burden indicators and the stewardship of European Commission Initiatives such as those on breast, cervical and colorectal cancer.

**Altogether, these initiatives undertaken between the 1980s and 2020 demonstrated the possibility of, and positive impacts from, EU action in cancer research and policy.** For example, by 2000, the 'Europe Against Cancer' programme was associated with an 'avoidance' of over 90,000 cancer deaths in that year, attributed to improved prevention and screening supported by its research activities<sup>1</sup>. However, the lack of specific prioritisation of cancer as part of the EU framework programmes for research and the small size of the EU health programmes (ranging from 300 to 450 million € over seven years, corresponding to less than 0.1% of the EU's overall budget) meant that **the scale of EU cancer action remained relatively small and the EU was still lacking a structured, comprehensive, measured and goal-oriented framework specifically dedicated to cancer research and policy alignment.**

Such developments in cancer research cooperation at the EU level have been also supported by mechanisms for research cooperation at the international level. This includes the establishment of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in 1965. IARC's epidemiological and laboratory-based studies, including the GLOBOCAN data publications, provide a critical backbone of knowledge and understanding to cancer research in Europe and around the world.

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### Table 1: Selected initiatives in EU cancer research and policy action before 2020



**Table 1: Selected initiatives in EU cancer research and policy action before 2020**

| TIME PERIOD                | FRAMEWORK OR FUNDING PROGRAMME                             | PROJECT                                                                                                                                  | FOCUS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1987 – Ongoing             | Europe Against Cancer<br>EU health programmes<br>EU4Health | European Code Against Cancer                                                                                                             | Series of evidence-based recommendations launched by the European Commission to inform the public about actions they can take to reduce their risk of cancer.<br><br>Developed by international cancer experts under the leadership of the International Agency for Cancer Research (IARC).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1989 – Ongoing             | Europe Against Cancer<br>EU health programmes<br>EU4Health | EUROCARE studies <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                            | Programme of EU-supported studies, standing for: European Cancer Registry–Based Study on Survival and Care of Cancer Patients. Analysing cancer survival data from up to 26 million cancer patients diagnosed since 1978, covering 109 cancer registries from 29 countries.<br><br>Commencement of these studies allowed for the first time meaningful multinational comparisons on cancer survivals. Their results continue to serve as benchmark for assessing survival variability across Europe, and guiding policy interventions in response.                                                                                 |
| 2005 – 2007<br>2011 – 2015 | FP6<br>FP7                                                 | EUROCAN+ <sup>3</sup><br><br>EUROCAN-Platform <sup>4</sup>                                                                               | EU coordination actions on improving cross-border collaboration in cancer research.<br><br>The EUROCAN+ feasibility study recommended the creation of a European Cancer Initiative (ECI) to foster collaboration across basic, clinical, and epidemiological research, integrate comprehensive cancer centres, and unify stakeholders to accelerate innovative cancer strategies.<br><br>EUROCAN-Platform was later created as a collaborative network of 28 leading European cancer institutions aiming to cover the entire cancer research continuum. Cancer Core Europe then grew as a legacy initiative from EUROCAN-Platform. |
| 2009 – 2021                | 2nd and 3rd EU Health Programmes                           | ePAAC <sup>5</sup> , CanCon <sup>6</sup> and iPAAC <sup>7</sup><br>Joint Actions                                                         | A set of EU-supported projects bringing together Member State representative authorities aimed at strengthening cancer control policies in Europe.<br><br>They focused successively on raising awareness and aligning national cancer strategies, developing quality standards and practical guidance for comprehensive cancer control, and fostering innovative approaches and sustainability of actions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2011 – Ongoing             | FP7<br>Horizon 2020                                        | TRANSCAN<br>TRANSCAN-2<br>TRANSCAN-3 <sup>8</sup>                                                                                        | A European cancer research initiative launched in 2011 and continued since through successor projects, bringing together funding bodies from multiple EU countries to align and jointly fund transnational cancer research.<br><br>Part of a series of European Research Area Networks, all dedicated to coordinating national research funding and fostering transnational research collaboration.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2017 – Ongoing             | 3rd EU health programme<br>EU4Health                       | European Reference Networks (ERNs): EURACAN <sup>9</sup> , EuroBloodNet <sup>10</sup> , GENTURIS <sup>11</sup> and PaedCan <sup>12</sup> | EU-supported virtual cross-border networks of highly specialized healthcare providers and reference centres across Europe.<br><br>ERNs focus on tackling rare, complex, or low-prevalence diseases and conditions that require expert knowledge and specialized treatment. They enable medical experts to collaborate virtually on diagnosis, treatment, patient management and research.<br><br>Four ERNs are mainly or exclusively focused on cancer conditions: EURACAN (adult solid rare cancers), EuroBloodNet (rare hematological diseases), GENTURIS (genetic tumour risk syndromes) and PaedCan (paediatric cancers).      |
| 2020 – 2024                | Horizon 2020                                               | CHAIMELEON <sup>13</sup>                                                                                                                 | An EU research and innovation project aimed to set up an EU-wide structured repository for cancer-related health imaging data and related clinical and molecular information to support AI development for cancer management.<br><br>Now being continued and widened through the EUCAIM initiative, coordinated by the same team.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



## 2019–2025 – A new era of EU research cooperation on cancer. Thinking bigger.

The 2019 European Parliament elections established a new political vision for European cooperation on cancer. Following pledges made during the electoral campaign for a European masterplan on cancer based on strong advocacy from the European cancer community<sup>14</sup>, and the research strategic plan of 2018 highlighting five societal challenges, including cancer<sup>15</sup>. Two landmark EU initiatives were launched:

- **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan<sup>16</sup>**, as a new flagship EU health policy plan against cancer, constituting the first-ever comprehensive EU policy plan against a disease, with the objective of reducing the cancer burden across Europe by addressing cancer prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship with a focus on equity.
- The **EU Cancer Mission<sup>17</sup>**, as the first-ever EU research plan dedicated to cancer, led by a board of European cancer experts, based on the mission concept<sup>18</sup> with the goal of improving the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030 through understanding, prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and quality of life for patients, cancer survivors and their families<sup>19</sup>.

**Both launched in 2021, the two initiatives constitute a historically unparalleled period of prioritisation in EU cancer action, aligning EU health and research agendas with a common spanning focus on the entire cancer journey, to understand cancer**

## from prevention to quality of life.

The Plan and the Mission have been supported by significant investment. As one of the pillars of the ambitious European Health Union, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan was launched with an announced total budget of €4 billion, including €1.25 billion from the newly established EU4Health programme, 12 times larger than the previous EU health programmes. Aimed to apply the mission principle developed by the economist Mariana Mazzucato to cancer along with four other selected topical areas, the EU Cancer Mission consists of a dedicated section of the Horizon Europe EU framework programme for research, under which it has been attributed over €110 million per year since 2021.

Political support for them has also been major, including through the leadership of the Cancer Plan by EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides and the work of Véronique Trillet-Lenoir MEP as rapporteur of the **European Parliament's Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA)**, both long-standing leading figures in the European cancer community. The latter culminated in the publication in 2022 of the 'Strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer' European Parliament report, consolidating the Parliament's recommendations for comprehensive EU action on cancer prevention, care, and research under the Cancer Plan and Mission.

## WHAT HAVE THE CANCER PLAN AND MISSION ACHIEVED?



**EU legislation and recommendations** in cancer prevention and detection, including on air pollution standards, occupational carcinogens, vaccine-preventable cancers, cancer screening and recently tobacco taxation.



Progressive emergence of **new platforms and infrastructures** on cancer within and beyond the EU services, including the Knowledge Centre on Cancer of the EU's Joint Research Centre, the Cancer Inequalities Registry, the EU platform on understanding cancer (UNCAN-eu), the pan-European federated infrastructure for cancer images (EUCAIM), the EU Cancer and Public Health Genomics Platform.



Ongoing establishment of **new collaborative networks** bringing together ministries of research and health under the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases, existing or developing national cancer bodies or communities in the aim of strengthening cross-border collaboration in cancer control.

This includes the EU Network of Comprehensive Cancer Centres, new EU Networks of Expertise on cancer, the EU Network of National Cancer Mission Hubs, the EU Network of National Cancer Data Nodes, the EU Network of Youth Cancer Survivors and the alliance of non-profit organisations to support multinational pragmatic clinical trials.



Creation and piloting of **new tools and interventions** in EU cancer policy and research, such as the Cancer Prevention App, the Cancer Survivor Smart-Card, the establishment of the European Cancer Patient Digital Centre, European questionnaires on quality of life assessment for cancer patients, capacity-building interventions on research capacities of Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructures, cancer screening programmes and training programmes for cancer professionals, among others.



Support to a wide range of **research projects and Joint Actions** on the understanding of cancer, cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment and quality of life.

Both initiatives have established bold statements of intent by the European Union on cancer. **More lives can be saved and improved through coordination across countries.** New foundations for the future have been established by the creation of fresh networks and infrastructures for cooperation on a range of research and practice areas and needs, **deeply transforming and strengthening the landscape of European cancer research.**

Now, as we collectively look to the next phase of EU action under the forthcoming budget period 2028-2034, it is opportune to reflect on both the strengths of EU cancer research cooperation that can be built upon, but to also invite reflections on areas where improvement, efficiency and higher impact may be realisable with reform of approach.

**Table 2: Selected initiatives in EU cancer research and policy action since 2020 (part 1)**

| TOPIC                                           | FRAMEWORK OR FUNDING PROGRAMME  | PROJECT                                                                                            | FOCUS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Understanding cancer                            | Horizon Europe (Cancer Mission) | UNCAN.eu <sup>21</sup><br>UNCAN-Connect <sup>22</sup>                                              | EU coordination and support action (CSA) preparing a blueprint for the creation of the UNCAN.eu platform as a European federated cancer research data hub.<br><br>Follows up on the UNCAN blueprint and develops a decentralized collaborative network for cancer research through a set of case studies, including researchers, SMEs, and innovators. |
| Cancer prevention                               | EU4Health                       | PreventNCD <sup>23</sup>                                                                           | EU Joint Action (JA) on planning and implementing effective cancer and other non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention policies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                 |                                 | BUMPER <sup>24</sup>                                                                               | EU action grant on supporting, enhancing, and promoting the design and development of the EU Mobile App for Cancer Prevention to provide information on cancer risk factors and effective preventive measures.                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                 |                                 | PROTECT-EUROPE <sup>25</sup><br>PERCH <sup>26</sup>                                                | EU action grant and JA on implementing the Beating Cancer Plan flagship objective to eliminate HPV-related cancers by promoting and implementing gender-neutral HPV vaccination programmes.                                                                                                                                                            |
| Cancer screening                                | EU4Health                       | PRAISE-U <sup>27</sup><br>SOLACE <sup>28</sup><br>TOGAS <sup>29</sup><br>EUCanScreen <sup>30</sup> | EU action grants on promoting and piloting prostate, lung and gastric cancer screening.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Digital cancer care and data                    | Digital Europe                  | EUCAIM <sup>31</sup>                                                                               | EU project aiming to create a pan-European, federated digital infrastructure of cancer-related medical images to enable cross-border access and analysis and advance AI-driven cancer care.                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                                 | EU4Health                       | CAN.HEAL <sup>32</sup>                                                                             | EU project aiming to build an integrated EU Cancer and Public Health Genomics platform, harmonising genetic profiling of patients and tumors across EU cancer centers to enable care, and advancing the use of polygenic risk scores for estimating cancer risk.                                                                                       |
|                                                 |                                 | eCan <sup>33</sup><br>eCan+                                                                        | EU JAs on improving the use of telemedicine and remote monitoring in cancer care, and enhancing the digital capabilities of cancer centres across the EU.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                                 | Horizon Europe (Cancer Mission) | EU-CIP <sup>34</sup>                                                                               | EU CSA developing the foundational step toward the European Cancer Patient Digital Centre, as a patient-centric, accessible digital portal that provides information to patients and caregivers throughout the cancer journey.                                                                                                                         |
|                                                 |                                 | CANDLE <sup>35</sup>                                                                               | EU CSA building a federated network of national cancer data nodes, as demonstrators for national disease-specific implementation of the European Health Data Space.                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Cancer research coordination and infrastructure | Horizon Europe (Cancer Mission) | FORCE <sup>36</sup>                                                                                | EU CSA bringing together charities to support multinational, pragmatic clinical trials, with a focus on rare and poor prognosis cancers.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                 |                                 | canSERV <sup>37</sup>                                                                              | EU CSA aiming to defragment the European cancer research landscape by connecting existing research infrastructures and offering a comprehensive platform of research services to academia and industry researchers.                                                                                                                                    |

**Table 2: Selected initiatives in EU cancer research and policy action since 2020 (part 2)**

| TOPIC                            | FRAMEWORK OR FUNDING PROGRAMME  | PROJECT                                                            | FOCUS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cancer networking                | EU4Health                       | EUnetCCC <sup>38</sup><br>CraNE <sup>39</sup>                      | EU JAs on preparing and setting up the EU Network of Comprehensive Cancer Centres.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                  |                                 | JANE <sup>40</sup><br>JANE 2 <sup>41</sup>                         | EU JAs on preparing and setting up seven new EU Networks of Expertise on cancer.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                  | Horizon Europe (Cancer Mission) | CCI4EU <sup>42</sup>                                               | EU CSA on strengthening research capacities of Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructures through maturity mapping and capacity building interventions.                                                                                                                        |
|                                  |                                 | ECHoS <sup>43</sup>                                                | EU CSA aiming to develop National Cancer Mission Hubs bringing together all relevant stakeholders to support the implementation of the EU Cancer Mission.                                                                                                                |
| Cancer professional training     | EU4Health                       | INTERACT-EUROPE <sup>44</sup><br>INTERACT-EUROPE 100 <sup>45</sup> | EU action grants on preparing and implementing an EU inter-specialty cancer training programme in 100 cancer centres across Europe.                                                                                                                                      |
| Quality of life and survivorship | Horizon Europe (Cancer Mission) | EUonQoL <sup>46</sup><br>e-QuoL <sup>47</sup>                      | EU CSAs aiming at improve quality of life throughout the cancer journey, through the development and piloting of a set of quality of life questionnaires, and the creation of a set of e-health tools to help paediatric and youth cancer survivors manage their health. |
|                                  | EU4Health                       | smartCare <sup>48</sup>                                            | EU action grant on designing a European Cancer Survivor Smart-Card.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                  |                                 | EU-CAYAS-NET <sup>49</sup><br>YARN <sup>50</sup>                   | EU action grants on setting up and developing the EU Network of Youth Cancer Survivors.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Cancer inequalities              | EU4Health                       | OriON <sup>51</sup>                                                | EU JA supporting the Cancer Inequalities Registry by monitoring the uptake and implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan by member states.                                                                                                                          |



## 2. 2025: Europe Looks Out to a World in Flux



At the mid-point of our current decade, one can already imagine that the accounts of the past 5 years of geopolitical activity will fill many shelves in the history section of libraries in the future.

**The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to reverberate**, with varying degrees of lesson learnt. The requirement for Europe to re-shore production of essential health and medicinal products has been recognised and responded to through significant legislative and administrative response. The need to further empower agencies of the EU such as the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has been met to a large degree. It is the view of the European Cancer Organisation that more lessons may yet still be applied in respect to: the value of access to near real time health data; the opportunities to lighten regulatory burden in some areas of research; and, the need to address shortages in health workforce capacity with the same energy and intent as now being directed towards medicines shortages. We are bound to the knowledge that in the face of a health crisis, Europe can react and act.

**The shock of Russia's military invasion of Ukraine is still acutely felt.** Once again, the collective

muscle of cross-border cooperation that the EU can exercise has been important in the response to both the security and humanitarian needs of the country. Existing EU infrastructures and networks have demonstrated their expertise and efficiency in reacting. Ukraine's subsequent admission to EU cooperation mechanisms such as Horizon Europe and the EU4Health programme, while now well established, have not undone the damage to clinical trial activity caused by the invasion, in a country that was previously exemplar in this field.

**Tariff battles with the USA and other countries are impacting all economic sectors in Europe**, inclusive of the health sector, where too often key medicinal and diagnostic products are not being exempted from the threats and counter-threats of tariff introduction and increase. United States health research is facing a severe crisis due to major federal funding cuts, particularly affecting the National Institutes of Health (NIH). With an estimated \$12 billion slashed and over 2,000 grants terminated<sup>52</sup>, critical areas like cancer research are experiencing halted clinical trials, delayed treatments, and disrupted innovation. Leading institutions warn that these cuts threaten patient care and the country's scientific leadership.<sup>53</sup>

**Meanwhile, in aggregate, the European Union has continued to experience slow and uneven economic growth over recent decades**, especially when compared to global peers like the United States and emerging economies. Amongst factors attributed to this include weaker productivity, slower rates of uptake on digitalisation opportunities, and a poorer record of capitalising on the science base available in Europe through its world-leading academic centres. This has been accompanied by a notable tendency to lean heavily on the innovation outputs of more dominant global actors,

such as the US, rather than building a more self-sustaining, innovation-driven ecosystem within the EU itself. In recognition of these issues, the European Commission has sought out expert advice and recommendations from a number of sources.

It is in these contexts and more that the new European Commission 2024-29 is making Competitiveness and Security major themes of the administration. Accordingly, both policy imperatives will likely form a significant backdrop to the next EU multiannual financial framework 2028-34.

**Table 3: Priorities for the future of European research as outlined in the Heitor, Letta and Draghi reports**

| ALIGN, ACT, ACCELERATE (HEITOR)                                                                                                                                            | MUCH MORE THAN A MARKET (LETTA)                                                                                                                                                           | THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN COMPETITIVENESS (DRAGHI)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Make Europe more globally competitive, secure, sustainable and resilient through a stronger framework programme (Recommendation 2)                                         | [...] moving away from traditional, siloed approaches, which will be crucial for ensuring research is relevant. (p. 22)                                                                   | The report recommends reforming the EU's next Framework Programme for R&I in terms of its focus, budget allocation, governance and financial capacity (part B, p. 245)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Deliver European added value through a portfolio of four interrelated and interdependent "spheres of action", with a budget of at least EUR 220 billion (Recommendation 3) | A coordinated and comprehensive European technology policy (p. 19)                                                                                                                        | Europe must profoundly refocus its collective efforts on closing the innovation gap with the US and China, especially in advanced technologies." (part A, p 19)<br><br>[...] refocus the next Framework Programme (FP10) on selected priorities (new 'EU Competitiveness Priorities') and increase the budget to EUR 200 billion. (part B, p. 247)                                                                                                                                       |
| Promote Competitive Excellence throughout the FP, strengthening the ERC, EIC and MSCA. Launch "Choose Europe" to foster research careers in Europe (Recommendation 5)      | Retaining talent is critical for Europe's economic resilience, innovation capacity, strategic independence, and societal welfare and should be one of the most urgent priorities. (p. 21) | Double the support to ground-breaking fundamental research through the European Research Council (ERC) (part B, p. 250)<br><br>The existing EIC Pathfinder should be reformed to improve its governance and then endowed with substantially greater resources to become a genuinely new 'ARPA-type agency' [...] (part B, p.248)                                                                                                                                                         |
| Strengthen the European RD&I ecosystem (Recommendation 8)                                                                                                                  | [...] the necessary skills, infrastructures, and investments, to enable widespread prosperity and industrial leadership. (p. 19)                                                          | [...] ERC-I should build on the high number of well-established European research institutions that rank in the middle to high tiers of the global distribution and propel some of them to the very top of academic excellence. (part B, p 251)<br><br>[...] a new EU framework for private funding to enable public universities and research centres to design more competitive compensation policies for top talents and to provide additional support for research. (part B, p. 253) |



### **Aligning policy agendas. Cancer research as part of a competitive and secure Europe.**

While the over-riding concern of ECO Research Policy Network is the means to achieve the most productive cancer research landscape in Europe for purposes of saving and improving lives, this Green Paper also recognises the existence, and need for Europe to respond to, major policy needs on competitiveness and security.

It is our consideration that a competitive Europe is a Europe which leads the world in research, including in cancer research. Where research funding is recognised as an investment and not an expense. Where the promise offered by research conducted can be duly translated to tangible improvements to patient care and treatment and citizens' understanding of the power of healthier lifestyles. Where places to develop excellent research are acknowledged and supported. Where burdens and obstacles to research productivity are rapidly identified and overcome. Where the full strength represented by the 793 million citizens represented within the countries of the EU Horizon Europe is capitalised upon.

It is our consideration that a secure Europe is a Europe that integrated through joint endeavour. That responds to grand and shared societal challenges together and effectively. That provides a beacon for other regions of the globe for what can be achieved by mutual cooperation across borders. That understands the principles of a true shared democracy and free research that will benefit all EU citizens.

It is our intent, by bringing forward fresh suggestions on the future of European cancer research cooperation, to make some contribution towards the achievement of these major areas of present EU policy focus.

## **ON THE NEXT PAGE Table 4: Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of present European cooperation mechanisms on cancer research**



**Table 4: Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of present European cooperation mechanisms on cancer research**



## STRENGTHS

**SCALE:** Horizon Europe research programme with a value of €95.5 billion, EU4Health programme with a value of €5.3 billion, alongside contributions from other EU funding programmes such as Digital Europe.

**SCALE:** 793 million citizens represented by 37 countries within Horizon Europe.

**INFRASTRUCTURES:** Framework Research Programme with 40 years of successful operation.

**EXPERTISE:** ~7,000–8,000 universities and equivalent higher-education institutions across all Horizon Europe countries.

**WORKFORCE:** diverse, multidisciplinary workforce including leading figures (e.g. Nobel prize winner Emmanuelle Charpentier) supported by pan-European collaboration networks and training initiatives driving advances in genetics, immunotherapy, diagnostics, and digital health.

**REGULATION:** Library of pan-European regulation designed to assist pan-European research such as the Clinical Trials Regulation and General Data Protection Regulation, which establish essential principles for citizen protection and research facilitation.



## WEAKNESSES

**CONTINUITY:** Criticism that there are too many 'stop-start' projects that are not given the duration needed to achieve maximum impact, due to a lack of coordination, global vision, and monitoring.

**CONTINUITY:** Insufficient follow-up on project outcomes, with inadequate collection and dissemination of results achieved.

**REGULATION:** Criticism that EU regulation is interpreted diversely across countries, is rigid and hard to change after problems identified, and can result in added burden for clinicians, researchers and trial sponsors.

**COMMERCIALISATION:** Europe behind other regions in turning research promise into innovative product that enhances patient outcome.

**EXPERTISE:** Criticism that funding calls may fall victim to 'design by committee', lacking a strong sense of overall coherence and inter-connection.

**SCALE:** Suggestion that greater productivity could be achieved by having less research projects but conducted at greater scale

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Not always clear who is in overall charge of Europe's cancer research effort. Targets and goals (e.g. in spreading research productivity and activity across more European countries) not always present and reported on.

**INEQUALITIES:** Too many countries in Europe remain left behind in terms of cancer research activity and productivity.

**WORKFORCE:** Too few researchers, with many key disciplines, such as health systems, economics, and social sciences, remaining underrepresented in the cancer research field.



## OPPORTUNITIES

**New EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–34:** Chance to restructure approach to EU supported cancer research.

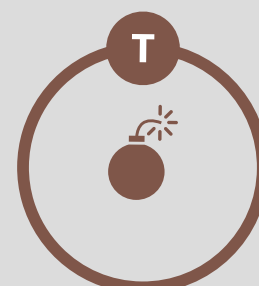
**EU Competitiveness Agenda:** Chance to unblock long-existing regulatory problems.

**EU Security Agenda:** Stimulus for deepening cross-border integration of efforts in fields such as health and cancer research.

**Continuity:** Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and EU Research Mission on Cancer have created solid foundations on which to build in the future.

**Scale:** Enhancing innovation capacity by exploring alternative funding and evaluation frameworks (e.g. high-risk high-reward projects; ARPA model).

**Expertise:** Involving leading experts early in the design process ensures funding calls are strategically coherent, better aligned, and mutually reinforcing.



## THREATS

**Geopolitical competition:** Europe falls further behind other regions in research productivity.

**Political prioritisation:** A long-term approach to EU investment in cancer research becomes hostage to the political cycle and shifting priorities of each Commission.

**Uncertainty:** Not known how Horizon Europe initiatives that benefit Cancer (including the EU Cancer Mission and Beating Cancer Plan but not limited to these) will be sustained during the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework period.



## Considering examples from elsewhere



### USA: The National Cancer Institute

In the United States, federal support for cancer research is primarily funded through government grants, particularly from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

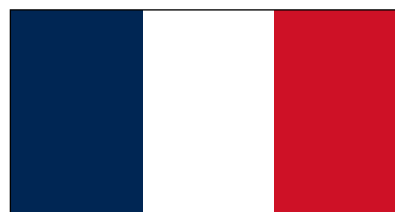
Originally signed into being by President Franklin D Roosevelt in 1937, the NCI became the first disease-specific federal agency for medical research in the U.S.A. Its relatively humble work programme was then greatly boosted by the 1971 National Cancer Act which, as part of President Richard Nixon's 'War on Cancer', gave NCI significant autonomy and additional funding, and established the SEER (Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results) programme for population-based cancer data. Through the 1980s, the NCI helped the USA to lead the field in the application of molecular biology, oncogenes, genetics, and tumour immunology. This included its support for the Human Genome Project and the eventual launch in 2005 of the Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA), a landmark project that mapped genetic mutations in 30+ types of cancer.

As the leader of the cancer research enterprise, collectively known as the National Cancer Program, and the largest funder of cancer research in the

world, NCI manages a broad range of research, training, and information dissemination activities that reach across the entire country, meeting the needs of all demographics—rich and poor, urban and rural, and all racial/ethnic populations. The main source of funding for NCI is the US Congress.

Private foundations like the American Cancer Society, pharmaceutical companies, charities and private investors also contribute significantly to funding, often focusing on specific types of cancer or treatment innovations. Additionally, academic institutions, biotech companies, and venture capital firms support research through institutional grants, partnerships, and investments in promising cancer innovation and therapies.

The NCI has an annual budget of \$7.3 billion.



### FRANCE: Institut National du Cancer (INCa)

The French National Cancer Institute (Institut National du Cancer – INCa)<sup>54</sup> was created by law on 9 August 2004, as part of France's first national cancer plan (2003–2007), and officially established as a groupement d'intérêt public in May 2005. The institute operates under the dual supervision and funding ("cotutelle") of the Ministère du Travail, de la Santé et des Solidarités and the Ministère de

l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, uniting public and private sector stakeholders.

The Institut is governed by a Board of Administrators (27 members) from government, hospital federations, research bodies, health insurance, charities, and qualified experts; it also has an international Scientific Council, an ethics committee, and two advisory committees involving healthcare professionals, patients, and users<sup>55</sup>.

Amongst the roles performed by the Institut national du cancer (INCa) includes:

- Overseeing the National Cancer Plans since 2003 and the ongoing Ten-Year Cancer Strategy (2021–2030)
- Constructing and operating regional cancer poles (cancéropôles) across the seven regions of France bringing together regional expertise research centres, hospitals, and industry for an adapted cancer care

The Cancer National Plans and the ten-year strategy equally programmes cancer research. INCa issues and is responsible for competitive calls for projects spanning fundamental, translational, clinical, public-health, and organizational research with sometimes combined public and charity funds and funds clinical and translational research through programmes like PHRCK, PRMEK, and PRTK.

INCa coordinates the following stakeholders involved in implementing the ten-year strategy:

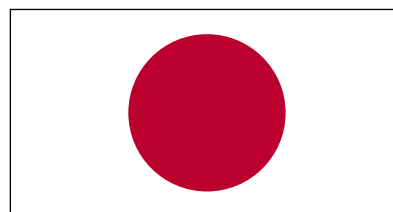
- **in the health sector:** French National Authority for Health, Santé publique France, French National Agency for Medicines and Health Products Safety, regional health boards;
- **in the research sector:** Inserm, CNRS, French National Cancer League, ARC Foundation for Cancer Research.

INCa also:

- Produces evidence-based recommendations, reference frameworks, professional labels, and national expertise.
- Collects, analyses, publishes and disseminates data on cancer incidence, mortality, and risk factors, underpinning French cancer surveillance.

- Runs information campaigns, organises symposiums, publishes resources for professionals and the general public.

INCa has an annual budget of between €120–147 million, funded mainly from public subsidies by the Health and Research ministries. Over 50% of the budget is dedicated to **research funding**, with the remainder covering public health, communications, operations, and personnel.



### JAPAN: The National Cancer Centre of Japan (NCC)

Japan's National Cancer Centre, established in 1962, plays a vital role in coordinating nationwide cancer research and data collection. It manages the country's national cancer registry and runs multi-institutional clinical trials and precision medicine initiatives. The institute also leads formation and implementation of Japan's Basic Plan to Promote Cancer Control (since 2007), setting priorities in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. The institute is at the forefront of genomics research, coordinating important research collaborations in this field such as C-CAT, SCRUM-Japan, NCC Oncopanel, and the Rare Cancer Centre.

Countries such as Brazil, South Korea and India also have national cancer institute, or highly similar style coordinating mechanisms, in place.

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### 3. A European Cancer Institute: A Long-Advocated Idea Whose Time Has Come?



Clearly, the concept of a centralising cancer institute is not entirely novel, with a raft of countries already embracing the concept of a centralising agency to guide and coordinate research efforts and also ensure coherence with national strategies on cancer control.

Nor too is the idea of a European Cancer Institute freshly made via this Green Paper. In 2001 clinical researchers were already publishing views and ideas related to the need for such a coordinating mechanism<sup>56</sup>. Notably, the European Academy of Cancer Sciences (EACS) has also championed the concept over a number of years<sup>57</sup>.

In 2008 the European Journal of Cancer led published debate on the topic, with leading cancer policy commentator Richard Sullivan remarking: “[...] there should be a virtual institute, which brings major funders, and key opinion leaders round the table. It could be a discussion forum which keeps the spotlight on one of the biggest health issues for Europe over the next decades.”<sup>58</sup>

The full weight of the European Parliament was also given to the concept through the 2022 Report “strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer – towards a comprehensive and coordinated strategy”. Championed by rapporteur and medical oncologist Véronique Trillet Lenoir MEP, the Parliament voted in support of the concept of a “European Knowledge Centre on Cancer”, with special coordinating tasks on European level cancer policy implementation. Hailing the cross-party support for her report, Trillet-Lenoir remarked at the time “The articulation of prevention, care and research actions will be ensured by a European Knowledge Center constituting a virtual “European Cancer Institute”.

In view of the above-described Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats present within the current EU landscape of cancer research, and taking account of experiences and practices from elsewhere, ECO’s Research Policy Network sees merit in considering again the merits (and demerits) of establishing a European Cancer Institute within the next EU multiannual financial framework period.



## WHAT WOULD A EUROPEAN CANCER INSTITUTE DO?

Although coordinating cancer care and/or research institutes exist in many countries across the globe, the nature and means by which they operate, their scope, their budgetary arrangements, all differ.

What would appear critical though, in order for any European Cancer Institute to add value to the cancer research landscape in Europe would be to ensure that it contributes towards:

- More long-term strategic approaches to EU supported cancer research, with clear goals and monitoring.
- Speaking with one voice of research integrity and evidence to policy makers and citizens.
- More efficient coordinated pathway from basic research to innovation, care and ultimate impact on society.
- Driving a citizen-centred cancer research agenda, addressing patients', health systems' and public health needs.
- Greater accountability for the decision-making and performance of EU supported cancer research.
- Placing EU supported cancer research in a place of greater security and certainty apart from the rapid changes otherwise often delivered by the political cycle.
- Speaking 'truth to power' on major policy needs for cancer research productivity in Europe, be they regulatory matters, or of an infrastructural nature (e.g. workforce, data needs).
- Achieving the full potential of Europe's scalability in terms of population size and breadth of universities and high standard cancer centres.
- Addressing persistent and chronic inequalities in Europe in respect to citizens' needs and patient access to clinical trials and uneven trial activity and productivity between countries.

As noted above, among proponents of a European Cancer Institute, some suggestions have been made that it could be a "virtual institute", that helps sustain efforts on strategic alignment, coordination and dissemination of the existing principal cancer research efforts in Europe e.g. through exchange and close partnership with the cancer research community and national cancer institutes. Its governance should be inclusive of all relevant parties, while remaining expert-led, with clear strategic goals and accountability for their delivery.

Alternatively, a 'bricks and mortar' institute could also be considered, headquartered in an EU member state city, similar to an EU agency

basing, and with a remit more in tune with those established for agencies such as the NCI in the USA and INCa in France.

Still further, a 'virtual institute' may be envisaged to be developed as an interim measure, through the terms of the next Horizon research framework period, building upon the foundations of the EU Cancer Mission and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. Dependent on experience and development, further decisions on its long-term operation, and mode of working, might be made at a future date.



## WHAT WOULD BE THE AIMS OF A EUROPEAN CANCER INSTITUTE?

For the purposes of consultation, this Green Paper initially suggests that a European Cancer Institute should be tasked with:

- Leading EU-wide efforts to improve cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment and quality of life, being the long-term successor vehicle for the full promises of the EU Cancer Mission Europe's Beating Cancer Plan to be delivered.
- Providing coordination and sustainability for key ongoing or existing EU initiatives in cancer action, including in cancer epidemiology, research and policy implementation.
- Supporting a goal of all cancer centres in Europe being active in research.
- Supporting the conduct of major EU funded pan-European cancer research projects across countries.
- Partnering with industry, philanthropic organisations, civil society organisations, and global institutions to tackle complex research challenges.
- Directing investment in cancer research infrastructure across EU member states, and in so doing, helping to ensure better geographical balance in funding and expertise in cancer research across Europe.
- Ensuring overall excellence in Europe's conduct of cancer research and restoring and enhancing its role as a world leader in cancer research.



## HOW COULD A EUROPEAN CANCER INSTITUTE OPERATE?

To ensure sustainability and long-term impact of EU investments in cancer, by making certain that projects and initiatives delivering real value continue to be supported, a European Cancer Institute should:

- Conduct and commission high-quality research to provide data-driven policy proposals that address cancer research, prevention, treatment, and survivorship across the EU, including high-risk, high-reward translational research with a potential for transforming cancer care across the continent.
- Establish strong working partnerships with patient organisations, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and research institutions to ensure diverse perspectives shape evidence-based policy priorities, leaning on the principles of a mission-guided approach. Wide stakeholder representation should be achieved in its governance, similar to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the French.
- Support the European Union in responding to regulatory and infrastructural challenges to high quality cancer research across Europe.
- Promote EU-wide cooperation on cancer care, research, and data sharing to reduce disparities in access to high-quality treatment and innovation across member states.

## YOUR OPINION MATTERS TO US

We invite views from any and all with interest in the matters laid out and discussed in this Green Paper. All comments returned will help to inform a subsequent 'White Paper', and your input is to be discussed at the European Cancer Summit, 19–20 November 2025, in Brussels, Belgium.

Responses should be sent to the team of the European Cancer Organisation through the form available by following the QR code below.

For further information, please send any questions you may have at [alexandra.eni@europeancancer.org](mailto:alexandra.eni@europeancancer.org).

## SOME GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATIONS

1. Please provide your views, experience and perspective on the way in which EU investment in cancer research is currently organised. Please refer to both positive and negative experiences.
  - a. strategy
  - b. funding
  - c. monitoring the impact
  - d. sharing of data/results produced
  - e. coordination and governance
2. What means of improving EU funding and cooperation on cancer research would you recommend for consideration by EU level decision-makers at this time?
3. Please provide your views and perspectives on the suggestion of creating a European Cancer Institute, as described in Section 3 of this Green Paper.
  - a. Are you positively or negatively inclined to the suggestion? Please describe the reasoning for your position.
  - b. Do the roles suggested for a European Cancer Institute, as described in Section 3 of this Green Paper, appear appropriate? Would you suggest amendment to this intention?
  - c. Please provide any experiences (positive and negative) or other reflections that would be helpful to share from national cancer institutes operating in other parts of the globe.



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## Feedback From the Research Policy Network and ECO's Policy Pathway

"Independent clinical research should be given a major attention to ensure the future of multidisciplinary required to improve clinical outcomes for all, focusing on what is not necessarily in the priority of the commercial sector. Optimising how major oncology challenges could be addressed trans-nationally, cross disciplines and tumours would be major added value. Such gap analysis would also be critical for delineating the gaps in the EU in that respect and re-build a good balance between commercial and non-commercial research."



- European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC)



**Patient**  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF  
EUROPEAN CANCER  
ORGANISATION

"We must prioritise intellectual effort and dedicated commitment, focusing on demonstrating effectiveness through knowledge and capability rather than financial means at the outset. This approach calls for an open, inclusive, and welcoming coalition that also emphasises the importance of fair data and collaboration to develop robust strategies that will, in time, attract the necessary investments."

- Gilliosa Spurrier-Bernard, co-Chair of ECO's Patient Advisory Committee

"Current practices make it difficult to access or compare datasets across institutions and Member States, which slows research translation and limits the generation of real-world evidence. Governance of cancer research in Europe is uneven, with duplication of efforts and inconsistent regulatory interpretations across Member States. EANM has consistently called for clearer, harmonised guidance for radiopharmaceuticals, better differentiation between in-house and commercial production, and structured engagement between researchers, regulators, HTA bodies, and professional associations."



- European Association for Nuclear Medicine



“Collaboration in European cancer research goes beyond borders. The EU should actively involve Third Countries and reduce regulatory and political barriers, because collaboration directly benefits patients everywhere. The voices of both people affected by cancer and our multinational research communities are crucial to show why these partnerships matter. Charities, governments, and industry all play vital, complementary roles in funding and enabling research, often working jointly. Ensuring equitable access to research, for example clinical trials, is not just about the world-leading science: it is about giving all families – including children and young people with cancer – access to better, kinder treatments to improve their outcomes. As someone from our Patient Involvement Network told us: ‘I don’t care about geographical boundaries...I just care about scientists being able to work together.’”

– Laura Williams, Cancer Research UK

“It is essential to take a holistic view of research, recognizing that cancer treatment outcomes depend not only on medicines, but also—first and foremost—on the skill of a capable surgeon. Advances in surgery and radiotherapy play an equally vital role in improving patient outcomes. The valuable findings of non-commercial clinical trials should not end in peer-reviewed journals alone; they must be translated into clinical practice. Therefore, there must always be a clear pathway from non-profit research to patients.”



– Anticancer Fund

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As the not-for-profit federation of member organisations working in cancer at a European level, the European Cancer Organisation convenes oncology professionals and patients to agree policy, advocate for positive change and speak up for the European cancer community.

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