



# Conquering Cancer: mission possible

By 2030 more than 3 million lives saved, living longer and better

## WHY A MISSION ON CANCER?

Cancer is an umbrella term for more than 200 diseases. Each year, **2.6 million people** in the EU-27 are diagnosed with cancer and this number is expected to increase rapidly because of **ageing populations**, **unhealthy lifestyles** and **unfavourable environmental conditions**. Without strong action, the number of cancer cases in Europe will increase by 25 % by 2035. Although survival rates of several cancer types have improved over the last decades, cancer still kills 1.2 million people in the EU-27 each year.

## OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the Mission on Cancer has been formulated as: “By 2030, more than 3 million lives saved, living longer and better”. This is consistent with **UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**. The target of this SDG for non-communicable diseases for 2030 is “to reduce by one third premature mortality through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being”. The Mission will address the **whole cancer control continuum**, i.e. from prevention of risk factors to survivorship support and end-of-life care, for all ages and cancers, including rare and poorly understood cancers, cancers in children, adolescents/young adults and the elderly, cancers in socially or economically vulnerable families and among people living in remote areas, across all Member States.

## MISSION PORTFOLIO

### AREAS OF INTERVENTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Understand cancer

- Launch UNCAN.eu – a European Initiative to Understand Cancer
- Develop an EU-wide research programme to identify (poly-)genetic risk scores Determinants

#### 2. Prevent what is preventable

- Support the development and implementation of effective cancer prevention strategies and policies within Member States and the EU
- Optimise existing screening programmes and develop novel approaches for screening and early detection

#### 3. Optimise diagnostics and treatments

- Advance and implement personalised medicine approaches for all cancer patients in Europe
- Develop an EU-wide research programme on early diagnostics and minimally invasive treatment

#### 4. Support quality of life

- Develop an EU-wide research programme and policy support to improve the quality of life of cancer patients and survivors, family members and carers, and all persons with an increased risk of cancer
- Create a European Cancer Patient Digital Centre where cancer patients and survivors can deposit and share their data for personalised care

#### 5. Ensure equitable access

- Achieve Cancer Health Equity in the EU across the continuum of the disease
- Set up a network of Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructures within and across all EU Member

#### 6. Cross-cutting recommendations

- Childhood cancers and cancers in adolescents and young adults: cure more and cure better
- Accelerate innovation and implementation of new technologies and create Oncology-focused Living Labs to conquer cancer
- Transform cancer culture, communication and capacity building
- States to increase quality of research and care

### CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

The Mission on cancer has been developed together with **citizens** and **cancer patients, survivors** and their **families** or **carers**. To ensure that the voice of citizens and patients is heard in all phases of Mission development and implementation, several **patient representatives** are members of the [Mission Board](#) and the [Mission Assembly](#). Moreover, members of the Board are taking the role of ambassadors to engage citizens and patients in their home countries in the developmental process of Mission providing messages and recommendations per each area of actions (*Understand, Prevent, Treat, Support Quality of life*). Participants expressed strong support for the overall goal identified for the Mission. There was appreciation for the fact that the goal is not only on saving lives, but also on **improving the lives** of those exposed to cancer. Participants felt that there is still a strong need for awareness raising in many countries, and emphasized that all EU citizens should have equal access to up-to-date scientific knowledge about cancer, education about cancer and cancer symptoms, and to prevention and treatment. The more the public knows about cancer, the easier it is for patients to go through treatment and recovery.

### COVID-19 and Cancer

COVID-19 has demonstrated the critical importance of health for any society. Indeed, the recent pandemic scenario clearly shows that the absence of health leads to severe economic, political and societal consequences for Europe. COVID-19 has also laid bare **critical insufficiencies in healthcare system** preparedness, adaptability and resilience. While the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented in terms of incidence and mortality, it is foreseeable that both **vaccines** and effective **treatments** will be found. Unfortunately, this will not be the case with cancer, which will remain one of the major killers in Europe. The Mission on Cancer will be a major driving force to apply the lessons from the current COVID-19 crisis to find solutions to the cancer challenge and beyond, taking advantage of unprecedented tools optimised along the COVID-19 current crisis: the willingness in **technology adaptation**, the collaboration across sectors and borders, including the extensive **data sharing**, the genuine communication and alignment between healthcare and research, the implementation of research findings and the ability to mobilise and allocate considerable **funding** resources in a short time.