

MEPs AGAINST CANCER MEETING **EARLY DIAGNOSIS & CANCER OF UNKNOWN PRIMARY**

Press Release, 26 June 2018

On 26 June 2018, S&D MEPs Theresa Griffin (UK) and Christel Schaldemose (DK) hosted an MEPs Against Cancer meeting on Early Diagnosis & Cancer of Unknown Primary. The meeting connected cancer experts from the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL), Cancer Research UK (CRUK), the Danish Cancer Society, Cancer Society of Finland, the CUP Foundation and the World Health Organization with other stakeholders including policy-makers, patients, healthcare professionals, academia and industry.

The host, MEP Theresa Griffin, opened the meeting stating: *"It is good that we are now having this discussion about Cancer of Unknown Primary - it is vital that we take steps to improve the situation across the EU for this under-discussed form of cancer. As someone who has lost a close relative to this cancer, I know that more needs to be done to support families going through this diagnosis, to put in place structures which will result in the earlier detection of this cancer, and to research and develop new and innovative treatments."*

Ms. Griffin's introduction was followed by a presentation on challenging diagnosis of cancer of unknown primary and its effects patients and by John Symons from the CUP Foundation. Mr. Symons looked into the opportunities offered by the molecular revolution for improving the situation for this neglected patient group before touching on international research into making the unknown, known. *"CUP is recognised in most studies around the world as being one of the 10 most common cancers yet few people have heard of it. Historically, life expectancy for the majority of CUP patients can be measured in months; but there are encouraging developments that suggest an improving outlook."*

Subsequently, Marilyns Corbex, PhD. From WHO Europe talked about the importance of early diagnosis in cancer by. Dr. Corbex stated: *"In the EU, the vast majority of cancer (more than 75%) are detected due to symptoms rather than screening, even in countries where screening programs are perfectly developed. Rapid diagnosis of symptomatic cancer patients is of primary importance to improve survival, but symptoms often remain overlooked. We tend to put the blame on patients 'who should have come earlier' but in most cases it is the health system which is to blame for such delays."*

The meeting continued with a presentation given by Ms. Helene Holm-Burén from the Danish Cancer Society who presented their campaign about self-detection of cancer and its impact on the early diagnosis in Denmark. Last but not least, Ms. Satu Lipponen from Cancer Society of Finland and the package leader of the iPAAC Joint Action on Cancer Control presented the policy action Member States projected for the next 4 years in prevention and early diagnosis. The meeting concluded with a round-table discussion with speakers and stakeholders.

MEP Christel Schaldemose concluded the meeting stating: *"The most important we can do is detecting any kind of cancer on an early stage. But it might be even more important when it comes to cancer of unknown primary, since even people doing a self-detection might not be aware of the symptoms that is significant for CUP. This has been a good discussion about a cancer disease that many don't know much or even anything about, and I hope this discussion will be able to put a greater focus on CUP and cancer in general."*

A full meeting report will be published in early July on www.mepsagaincancer.eu
For more information, please contact MAC@europeanancerleagues.org

