

To: Cancer Mission Board and Assembly
European Commission (DG RTD)
European Parliament (ITRE Committee)

10 July 2020, Brussels

Subject: Reflection of European Cancer Leagues and the Anticancer Fund on the interim report of Cancer Mission

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to congratulate you on the publishing of the interim report of the mission board for cancer which comprehensively covers key aspects of cancer prevention and care. However, before publishing of the final report, the [Association of European Cancer Leagues](#) (ECL) and the [Anticancer Fund](#) would like to draw your attention to the below recommendations, which, if implemented, would contribute to bringing both greater value to cancer patients and larger return on public investment.

In order to deliver a Cancer Mission driven by **public health and patients' needs** and by the ultimate objective of **bringing maximum value for public investment to European patients and citizens at large**, we suggest:

I. Reformulating the 'Recommendation 5: Advance and implement personalised medicine approaches for all cancer patients in Europe', by:

- Rather than focusing on 'implementation' of precision medicine and accompanying diagnostics where there is sufficient commercial funding and high uncertainty connected to added value of such treatments to patients in terms of prolonging survival and quality of life,¹²³ the Mission should support independent clinical research that ultimately demonstrates the added therapeutic value for patients (overall survival and quality of life) and incentivise novel clinical trial designs and research on treatments that are neglected by pharmaceutical industry such as:
 - ✓ **Treatment optimisation research** to identify the optimal dosage and duration of existing treatments, both for the benefit of patients and to guarantee the sustainability of healthcare systems;
 - ✓ **Drug re-purposing research** to find new applications of well-established, effective and widely available generic medicines.
 - ✓ **Multimodality combination treatments.**

¹ Tannock, I. F. and Hickman J. A., 'Limits to Personalized Cancer Medicine', *The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 375(13), 2016 – underlined that 'There should also be a clear message to patients that personalized cancer medicine has not led to gains in survival or its quality and is an appropriate strategy only within well designed clinical trials.'

² Prasad, V. et al., 'Precision oncology: origins, optimism, and potential', *Lancet Oncology*, vol. 17, 2016.

³ Davis, C. et al., 'Availability of evidence of benefits on overall survival and quality of life of cancer drugs approved by European Medicines Agency: retrospective cohort study of drug approvals 2009-13'. *The BMJ*, vol. 356, 2017.

II. Ensure that *'Recommendation 8: Create a European Cancer Patient Digital Centre where cancer patients and survivors can deposit and share their data for personalised care'* calls for:


- **Reduction of fragmentation of oncology data** sources and striving to achieve a well-functioning European Health Data Space with focus on integration of real world data sources and harnessing quality-of-life data, while securing principles of data safety, open science and FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable).

ECL and ACF agree with the aim to advance the methodology of outcomes-based programmes where patient- and society-relevant outcomes are not limited to response rates, but also include quality of life aspects. Nevertheless, with the current level of evidence we do not agree with its 'uptake', 'scaling' and 'implementation' which are so prominently mentioned in the interim report.

We sincerely believe that integration of the above stated objectives in the report will contribute to the development of a Cancer Mission which strives to bring benefit to patients and European society at large.

We remain at your disposal shall you have any questions or remarks.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr. Lydie Meheus
Director, Anticancer Fund



Dr. Sakari Karjalainen
President, European Cancer Leagues

See more regarding the priorities of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) for Horizon Europe's Cancer Mission [here](#). In case of any questions, contact Anna Prokupkova, ECL's Advocacy and Project Manager via [Anna\(at\)europcancerleagues.org](mailto:Anna(at)europcancerleagues.org).

See Anticancer Fund's recommendations for the Cancer Mission [here](#). In case of further query, contact ACF's Director Dr. Lydie Meheus via [Lydie.Meheus\(at\)anticancerfund.org](mailto:Lydie.Meheus(at)anticancerfund.org).