



PRESS RELEASE

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ECCO pushes for new effort on EU research

The renewal of Europe's research and innovation programme is an unmissable opportunity to increase investment in cancer research and make cooperation more effective, according to ECCO - the European CanCer Organisation. Recommendations for achieving these goals are set out today in ECCO's response to a European Commission consultation on the future of EU research support*.

Cancer is a major societal challenge and a huge burden on individuals and healthcare systems alike, making research into new treatments an urgent priority. Cancer is also an area where innovative ways of conducting research at the European level can be pioneered.

In order for new cancer treatments to reach patients more rapidly, the complete research continuum must be addressed. This means establishing effective links from basic research to preclinical and clinical research through to hospital application and evaluation, with multidisciplinary and multi-professional teams.

These links along the research continuum are being made by Europe's Comprehensive Cancer Centres. Since the beginning of 2011, some of them have been collaborating through the EurocanPlatform, a Network of Excellence supported by the present EU R&D programme. ECCO calls for the expansion of model networks such as this, which in the case of cancer could include the majority if not all leading cancer researchers in Europe, creating a virtual European Cancer Centre.

"Such a body would have the potential to outperform any other cancer research initiative worldwide and could certainly bring Europe into a leadership position," says Julio Celis, Chair of the ECCO Policy Committee.

With an innovative combination of public and private finance, this Centre could also serve as a model for researching other diseases. "An obvious next step in the process would be the creation of a European Institute of Health to foster innovation, with the European Cancer Centre as one of its core units."

The ECCO response paper also calls for:

- A greater proportion of national budgets to be transferred to EU level or earmarked for supranational co-operation.
- A new mechanism to support top researchers through "Dream Teams," allowing industry to contribute cash and provide new drugs for study.
- Support for all areas of research on the prevention of cancer.

The ECCO position paper is available at http://www.ecco-org.eu/binarydata.aspx?type=doc/ECCO_response_to_EC_Green_Paper_CSF_FINAL.pdf

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Notes to Editors

*European Commission Green Paper: From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding.

- The EurocanPlatform Network of Excellence brings together Comprehensive Cancer Centres, basic and preclinical cancer centres alongside pan-European organisations in an integrated network to share resources and infrastructures to accelerate scientific breakthroughs and develop new treatments.
- ECCO, the European CanCer Organisation, exists to uphold the right of all European cancer patients to the best possible treatment and care and to promote interaction between all organisations involved in cancer research, education, treatment and care at European level. Providing the unifying voice of European Societies representing professionals in oncology, ECCO proactively engages with policy-makers in driving oncopolicy in Europe. Through its 24 Member Organisations representing over 60,000 professionals in Europe, ECCO is the only multidisciplinary and multiprofessional organisation that connects and responds to all stakeholders in oncology Europe-wide. For more information and a full list of member societies, visit: www.ecco-eu.org