

THE EU BUDGET 2021-27: SET BIG GOALS AND SUPPORT THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

An open letter to EU National Leaders and Ministers of Finance ahead of 20th February Council Meeting

ADDRESSED TO: EU NATIONAL LEADERS AND MINISTERS OF FINANCE

18 FEBRUARY 2020

Dear Leaders and Ministers of Finance,

I write to you on behalf of the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO), the umbrella federation of 28 European and international level societies working with 17 patient advocacy organisations to improve cancer care and outcomes in all countries. I write in respect to Thursday's special meeting of the European Council on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27. I seek your assurance that the impact of these decisions upon the success or otherwise of Europe's fight against cancer will be uppermost in your mind during this time. The EU's budgetary ability to support activities against cancer is of, literally, a vital nature.

ECCO and the cancer community have been gratified that our calls for the EU to focus on the citizens' priorities, such as tackling cancer, have been heard and responded to. The commencement of both an EU Cancer Mission and a connected European Beating Cancer Plan can demonstrate once more to the European public the great benefits achieved when countries come together with united purpose and shared goals.

However, I must express an urgent and growing sense of concern from the cancer community that, dependent on decisions made at this week's Council Meeting, recent commitments on tackling cancer could fail to meet public expectation if resulting cuts to spending plans need to be made. Our understanding of the Finnish Presidency compromise proposal is that it represents a real terms cut on what the European Commission has analysed as necessary to deliver existing plans for European Union (EU) activity.

The EU has already achieved much in creating impactful cooperation on health and cancer care. The Horizon research programme, activities of the Joint Research Centre, IPAAC and other cancer-related Joint Actions, the European Reference Networks and the European Code Against Cancer, are only some of the important initiatives that deliver so much often on comparatively modest budgets.

Cutting the resource available to EU cooperation mechanisms for cancer will logically restrict the scale of success that might be achieved by the new EU Cancer Mission and Cancer Plan. This risks letting down a generation of citizens. We urge you to instead understand now is the time to inspire the public with a new focus by the EU on the priorities that matter most to the public, such as on beating cancer.

We request you to provide the actors and agents across Europe who are ready to serve the goals of the EU Cancer Mission and Cancer Plan with the tools and support to deliver them. This means an EU budget that matches the crucial ambitions we set ourselves. **The cancer community relies on your judgement on 20th February.**

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Matti Aapro
President
The European CanCer Organisation (ECCO)