

## Joint statement by ESC and ECPC on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan Calling for greater focus on cancer comorbidities

The [European Society of Cardiology \(ESC\)](#) and the [European Cancer Patient Coalition \(ECPC\)](#) welcome the launch of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and its flagship initiatives and fully endorse their comprehensive approach across prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and quality of life of cancer survivors.

Despite the fact that advances in cancer treatments have improved clinical outcomes, leading to an increasing population of cancer survivors, this success is associated with high rates of short- and long-term complications and comorbidities, among which one of the most significant is cardiovascular toxicity. The number and variety of cancer treatments and their cardiovascular toxicities make long-term care a complex undertaking.

Cancer-related complications and comorbidities represent a highly significant burden on patients across Europe that is all too often neglected when it comes to policy and research. Cardiovascular complications of cancer therapy are one of the most important and frequent side effects and are the second leading cause of death in cancer patients.

We welcome that Europe's Beating Cancer Plan will use the remarkable potential of new technologies and scientific progress, including insights from comorbidities, to better address cancer across the entire disease pathway through its flagships and actions. The EU is in a unique position to maximise the potential of new technologies and scientific progress that will benefit cancer patients.

**To address the unmet needs of patients suffering from cancer-related complications and comorbidities, the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and the European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC) call on the European Commission to make cancer-related complications and comorbidities a central component of the Cancer Plan.**

In particular, ESC and ECPC ask the EU to recognise cardiovascular disease as the main side effect of cancer treatment and include it with other cancer-related complications and comorbidities in the following flagship initiatives:

**A new Knowledge Centre on Cancer will be launched in 2021 within the Joint Research Centre to help coordinate scientific and technical cancer-related initiatives at EU level.**

There is a lack of collective knowledge on cancer complications and comorbidities, therefore we welcome the creation of a Knowledge Centre on Cancer. ESC and ECPC expect the new Knowledge Centre on Cancer to put special attention on research of cancer-related complications and comorbidities, including cardiotoxicity, during cancer treatment and survivorship.

**Establishing by 2025 an EU network supported by the existing four rare cancer focused European Reference Networks and a group of newly created Reference Networks.**

The creation of new European Reference Networks addressing cancer co-morbidities is an important step to benefit from cross-border cooperation and EU expertise. ESC and ECPC expect to see the creation of a specific Reference Network addressing cancer-related complications and comorbidities, prioritising cardiovascular disease and cancer-associated thrombosis.

**Ensuring a high-quality health workforce**

We welcome the proposal to launch an inter-speciality cancer training programme as continuous medical education across disciplines is key to strengthen and expand a multidisciplinary workforce in all EU countries. ESC and ECPC expect the field of cardio-oncology to be a key component of this programme.

**Launching the 'Better Life for Cancer Patients Initiative' providing a 'Cancer Survivor Smart-Card'**

ESC and ECPC welcome the proposal to create a Cancer Survivor Smart Card. We expect this card to include details of the cancer treatment undergone and include information on possible side effects which can appear several years after the oncological treatment has ended. ESC and ECPC are willing to offer their expertise to the European Commission for the development of these initiatives.