



Latvian Association of Oncology Patient Organizations

“OncoAlliance”

Ūnijas ielā 15a, Rīgā
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Riga, September 2020

Walter Riccardi
Chair
Mission Board for Cancer

Stella Kyriakides
European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Dear Mr. Riccardi and Mrs. Kyriakides,

On behalf of all Latvian oncology patients, we, the Latvian Association of Oncology Patient Organizations, the OncoAlliance, which unites various cancer patient organizations for the purposeful implementation of evidence-based patient advocacy, unequivocally support the 13 recommendations of the European Cancer Mission Council and their full implementation in Latvia. We see the aforementioned recommendations as an important step towards achieving the goal of saving 3 million people by 2030 by living longer and better. We wish to highlight Recommendation no. 9 “to achieve equal treatment of cancer in the European Union throughout the course of the disease” as especially important in the context of Latvia. By purposefully promoting equality in the field of oncology at the European level, it is possible to bring the quality of life and treatment options of cancer patients living in Eastern European countries closer to that in Western European countries.

Reducing inequality in access to treatment is one of the most important aspects for oncology patients and it must be set as a priority of the European Union's Cancer Mission. It is unfortunate that cancer patients with the same diagnosis still receive differential quality and effectiveness of treatment in Europe, depending on the country of their residence. We believe that a common position of European Member States in promoting equality is the only way to achieve equal opportunities for cancer patients to live longer and better lives, regardless of their geographical location. Moreover, we are concerned that, by deliberately avoiding taking steps to reduce inequality, the gap between the opportunities for European cancer patients will increase over time. To prevent this, we call for:

1. Introducing common guidelines and quality requirements for cancer treatment at the European level;

2. Establishing uniform, measurable and clear quality requirements for the accreditation of comprehensive cancer centres and other treatment facilities in Europe;
3. Developing Comprehensive Cancer Centres of Excellence to provide additional support to Member States' cancer centres in both science and treatment
4. Developing oncology plans in European countries aimed at achieving the goal of the Cancer Mission: to ensure a long term survival of 70% of cancer patients by 2030;
5. Implementing a common methodology for health technology assessment and common standards for their implementation;
6. Promoting the development of common databases, which in the future would provide both common cancer registries and a repository of cancer information that can promote cancer research.
7. Facilitating patient mobility by reducing bureaucratic barriers to cross-border medicine and creating access to international clinical trials, as well as support for patient travel for treatment and examination;
8. Improved cross-European access to modern infrastructure, training and mentoring programs for young colleagues and developing countries;
9. Promoting international cooperation among specialists: international expert groups and specialized councils as a second opinion;
10. Devoting additional efforts to the development of Eastern and Central European countries by considering targeted projects in Eastern European countries to achieve the goals of the Cancer Mission, both in the field of infrastructure development and consulting.

We hope that the proposals put forward by the OncoAlliance will enable the European Cancer Mission Council to develop 13 recommendations, making the reduction of inequalities at European level a priority for the Cancer Mission, and to succeed in achieving this goal.

Yours sincerely,

Members of the OncoAlliance

Harijs Gals,

Founder of the OncoAlliance, Head of the Association of Lung Cancer Patients and Their Relatives

Uldis Vesers,

Founder of the OncoAlliance, Head of the Association of Bowel Cancer Patients “EuropaColon Latvija”

Zinta Irīda Uskale,

Founder of the OncoAlliance, Head of “Rozā vilciens” Charity Foundation

Irīna Januma,

Founder of the OncoAlliance, Head of the Latvian Women's Volunteer Association “VITA”

Helmuts Bēķis,

Founder of the OncoAlliance, Head of “Movember Latvija” Foundation

Olga Valciņa,

Founder of the OncoAlliance, Head of “Soli priekšā melanomai”