

CANCER SURVIVORSHIP:

ADVANCING THE RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN

Stocktaking of progress and challenges



14 May 2024, 10:00 – 15:00

Breydel Auditorium,
European Commission, Brussels



FLASH REPORT

Advances in cancer detection, treatment and care have markedly improved survival rates over the past 20 years. The '[Cancer Survivorship: Advancing the right to be forgotten](#)' event, which took place on 14 May, aimed to showcase the European Commission's commitment to fostering access in the area of financial services for all those with a history of cancer, as part of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. The goal is for "proportionate information" to be used when assessing the eligibility of applicants for financial products, notably insurance linked to mortgages. Around 70 delegates took part on site and 130 online, including cancer patients and survivors, medical professionals, representatives of public health authorities and the financial sector.



it is important to keep up the momentum on the right to be forgotten and continue the discussions in view of finding an agreement that is fair and sets the highest standard for Europe's cancer community

Stella Kyriakides

European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety



Stella Kyriakides

COMMISSIONER FOR

The event was opened by Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, who talked about Europe's Beating Cancer Plan as a central pillar of the European Health Union. She explained that **currently, 12 EU Member States have established mechanisms to give cancer survivors the right to be forgotten: 8 in the form of legislation, 4 in the form of a code of conduct**, noting that there are many differences to these approaches and that several countries still have nothing in place. The Commissioner stressed the importance of keeping up the momentum on the right to be forgotten, whilst setting higher and fairer standards for the European cancer community.

Testimonies, evidence and informed policy

A personal testimony was delivered by Ania Buchacz of the Fundation Pani Ani and representative of the European Network of Youth Cancer Survivors. She spoke of the challenges people with a history of cancer face including financial, societal, and personal issues. She noted that unfortunately cancer survivors in Poland are not yet enjoying equal access to financial services, but she is hopeful that this can change.

“The right to be forgotten should not vanish from the agenda – this is something that people with lived experience need. It’s about having a normal, quality of life.”

In the panel session on the importance of partnerships for improving the quality of life of people with a history of cancer, representatives from the cancer community (Mike Morrissey, European Cancer Organisation, and Roxana Albu, Association of European Cancer Leagues) and the financial sector (Michaela Koller, Insurance Europe, and John Turner, Reinsurance Advisory Board) talked about the potential for an EU-level code of conduct. There was broad consensus on continuing to understand the requirements for a fair and sustainable financial system and working together to advance on the right to be forgotten in Europe.

“We have a shared responsibility; we are not yet there but we are learning and are still committed to try and find solutions.”

A complementary panel discussion underlined the importance of building policies on science and evidence. New data on survivorship is coming in all the time, which should underpin decisions. Presentations from national and EU experts (Elena Demuru, Italian National Institute of Health, Gemma Gatta, IRCCS National Cancer Institute Foundation, and Sandra Caldeira, Joint Research Center) allowed participants to learn about the latest data on cancer survivorship, including how it is consolidated in the European Cancer Information System.

National deep-dives and conclusions

The afternoon programme began with a look at national policies and initiatives from Cyprus (Stella Mastora, Europa Donna), Ireland (Florian Wimber, Insurance Ireland), Belgium (Françoise Meunier, Ending Discrimination against cancer survivors) and France (Philippe-Jean Bousquet, Collecteur analyseur de données, former French National Cancer Institute). The different experiences with legislation and voluntary codes of practice were presented, as well as national specificities that guided these decisions. Participants also highlighted the shift towards increased quality of life within survivorship and the advocacy work that has led to progress in several countries.

“

Depending on where you live as a cancer survivor you might have access to a financial product, or indeed for many, you might not... right now, too many cancer survivors do not have the right to be forgotten.”

Mairead McGuinness

European Commissioner for financial services, financial stability and the Capital Markets Union



Concluding remarks were delivered by **Mairead McGuinness**, European Commissioner for Financial Services, Financial Stability and Capital Markets Union, who noted the important links between health and finance. She stressed the shared desire to improve access for cancer survivors to financial services and encouraged all players to find a way to reach agreement on an EU-level code of conduct.