

Flash Report

Sub-group on Cancer under the Expert Group on Public Health

7 March 2023

The Sub-group on Cancer under the Commission Expert Group on Public Health held a virtual meeting, jointly chaired by DG RTD and DG SANTE. The representatives of 21 Member States, plus Norway, attended the meeting together with several Commission services, and agencies¹.

Updates: Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and EU Mission on Cancer

DG SANTE informed about developments in the implementation of the **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**. This included a report² on the **European Cancer Imaging Initiative** that was launched on 23 January in Brussels and the **World Cancer Day** event held in Stockholm³ on 1 February 2023 under the Swedish Presidency. The cancer country profiles⁴ within the Cancer Inequality Registry process were also released at the same event. Plans for a webinar to showcase EU4Health projects during the **European Week Against Cancer** were also presented. To round off, DG SANTE informed participants about **policy initiatives and legislation** regarding maximum permitted levels of arsenic in food⁵ and vaccine preventable cancers.

DG RTD then informed about the work of the **Mission Board on Cancer**, including their role as **Mission Ambassadors**. As part of **citizen engagement** under the Mission on Cancer, workshops with cancer survivors and parents took place, to prepare a conference⁶ on "Addressing the needs of young cancer survivors", which took place on 7 February 2023. Following the adoption of the Mission Work Programme 2023, the **Info Days** on 17 and 18 January 2023 provided detailed information on its content. DG RTD also informed about meetings related to the actions on UNCAN.eu and European Cancer Patient Digital Centre as well as its work on building synergies with other initiatives. Among those, the kick-off event of the **National Mission Hubs** which will be held on 3-4 May 2023 was highlighted. As part of the review and assessment of missions, DG RTD presented the activities, which will inform an **EC Communication**, planned for July 2023.

Presentation of EU Mission on Cancer projects and creation of project clusters

Since the launch of the Mission on Cancer in September 2021, three Mission Work Programmes were prepared and adopted; the calls of the Cancer Mission Work Programme 2023 opened on 12 January this year. DG RTD gave an overview of the status including the various projects launched under the Mission on Cancer. DG RTD updated the group on the development of the **UNCAN.eu platform**, the **European Cancer Patient Digital**

¹ Directorates-General represented included Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CNECT), Energy (ENER), Environment (ENV), Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (FISMA), Research and Innovation (RTD), and Health and Food Safety (SANTE), as well as the Joint Research Centre (JRC), and representatives from a number of EU decentralised and executive agencies such as the Consumer, Health and Food Executive Agency (HaDEA).

² <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/event-report-cancer-imaging-initiative>

³ https://health.ec.europa.eu/latest-updates/flash-report-equity-excellence-and-innovation-modern-cancer-care-all-1-february-2023-2023-02-07_enhttps://swedish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/events/conference-on-cancer-12/

⁴ <https://cancer-inequalities.jrc.ec.europa.eu/country-cancer-profiles#:~:text=The%20Country%20Cancer%20Profiles%20aim,the%20EU%20as%20a%20whole.>

⁵ Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/465 of 3 March 2023 amending Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 as regards maximum levels of arsenic in certain foods: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023R0465&qid=16780707098>

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGX9M7ti0oE>

Centre, the network of national **Cancer Mission Hubs**, a Coordination and Support Action to support **Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructures**. DG RTD explained then about the work on **the creation of project clusters** to leverage synergies among projects. Clusters are developed to build a portfolio of projects that address the Mission's objectives.

Discussion centred on Joint Actions under EU4Health WP 2023

DG SANTE updated participants on **Joint Actions (JAs)** under the EU4Health Work Programme 2023. These include JAs on cancer screening, SAMIRA Action Plan, EU Network of Comprehensive Cancer Centres and New Networks of Expertise. Member States were encouraged to participate. An animated discussion followed, during which it was concluded that preparatory discussions for these JAs within the framework of the subgroup would be useful and that cancer screening should be prioritised.

Consultation of the Cancer Sub-Group on the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on vaccine-preventable cancers

DG SANTE informed about the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on vaccine-preventable cancers, a part of a Prevention Package which is included in the Commission Work Programme 2023⁷ and planned to be adopted in the third quarter 2023. This proposal aims to help Member States address vaccine-preventable cancers with a focus on increasing the uptake of vaccination against Human papillomaviruses (HPV) and Hepatitis B virus (HBV). Participants in the Sub-group were asked a series of questions regarding necessary action; a detailed discussion followed.

Specific presentations on EU4Health WP 2021/2022

DG SANTE explained that since 2021, an unprecedented number of cancer-related project calls were launched under the EU4Health Programme. The Work Programme 2021 is under full implementation and the first batch of projects funded under the Work Programme 2022 are also commencing. Project leaders could be invited to future meetings to provide more detailed information and HaDEA could provide a 'helicopter' view; participants agreed that this approach is of value.

Conclusions

The Chairs thanked everyone for their attention and valuable contributions. The next meetings are scheduled for 28 April 2023 and 21 June 2023. Participants were encouraged to raise topics⁸ that they would like to discuss.

⁷ [Commission work programme 2023 \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip23_1000)

⁸ Sante-RTD-Cancer@ec.europa.eu