



Paris, 2 June 2025

## **POLITICAL OPINION**

### **on Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**

- (1) The Senate European Affairs Committee,
- (2) Having regard to Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- (3) Having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 3 February 2021 entitled "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan" (Cancer Plan), COM (2021) 44 final,
- (4) Having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2022 on strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer - towards a comprehensive and coordinated strategy (2020/2267(INI)),
- (5) Having regard to the Commission staff working document of 4 February 2025 entitled: "Review of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan", SWD(2025) 39 final,
- (6) Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/522 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 March 2021 establishing a Programme for the Union's action in the field of health for the period 2021-2027, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 282/2014,
- (7) Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation

and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013,

- (8) Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 2021/694 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the Digital Europe Programme and repealing Decision (EU) 2015/2240,
- (9) Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2017/745 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2017 on medical devices, amending Directive 2001/83/EC, Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 and repealing Council Directives 90/385/EEC and 93/42/EEC,
- (10) Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2017/746 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2017 on in vitro diagnostic medical devices and repealing Directive 98/79/EC and Commission Decision 2010/227/EU,
- (11) Having regard to Directive 2014/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products and related products and repealing Directive 2001/37/EC,
- (12) Having regard to Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2022/2100 of 29 June 2022 amending Directive 2014/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the withdrawal of certain exemptions in respect of heated tobacco products,
- (13) Having regard to the Council Recommendation of 3 December 2024 on smoke- and aerosol-free environments replacing Council Recommendation 2009/C 296/02, C/2024/7425
- (14) Having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system, COM(2020) 381 final,
- (15) Having regard to Directive (EU) 2024/2881 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe,

- (16) Having regard to Directive (EU) 2024/3019 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 concerning urban wastewater treatment,
- (17) Having regard to the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration, and Directive 2008/105/EC on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy, COM(2022) 540 final,
- (18) Having regard to the Council Recommendation of 21 June 2024 on vaccine-preventable cancers, C/2024/4259,
- (19) Having regard to the Council Recommendation of 9 December 2022 on strengthening prevention through early detection: A new EU approach on cancer screening replacing Council Recommendation 2003/878/EC, 2022/C473/01,
- (20) Having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2024 on the urgent need to revise the Medical Devices Regulation,
- (21) Whereas cancer is the second leading cause of death in the European Union;
- (22) Whereas Europe accounts for a quarter of the world's cancer cases but represents only 10% of the world's population;
- (23) Whereas the incidence of cancer is expected to rise in coming years;
- (24) Whereas the Cancer Plan covers all aspects of the fight against cancer, namely prevention, early diagnosis, healthcare provision and quality of life for cancer patients and survivors;
- (25) Whereas the Cancer Plan aims to promote the use of new technologies, research and innovation in the fight against this disease;
- (26) Whereas it should also make it possible to reduce inequalities linked to cancer in the European Union and support the fight against childhood cancer;
- (27) Whereas the Commission has launched the great majority of the initiatives set out in the Cancer Plan;

- (28) Whereas the Commission plays an essential role in implementing the Cancer Plan, with the involvement of several Directorates-General;
- (29) Whereas most Member States have national cancer plans, and their support is essential for the implementation of the initiatives of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan;
- (30) Whereas this represents an unprecedented financial commitment, with a potential budget of €4 billion dedicated to implementation of the Cancer Plan and to research;
- (31) Whereas this budget forms part of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework;
- (32) Whereas the budget allocated to the fight against cancer is likely to decrease after 2027, as the Commission has announced new priorities, in particular the fight against cardiovascular disease;
- (33) Whereas certain structures created as part of the Cancer Plan are intended to continue beyond 2027;
- (34) Congratulates the Commission on its commitment to the fight against cancer and on the launch of the great majority of the initiatives set out in the Cancer Plan;
- (35) Considers that the plan proposed by the Commission is comprehensive, necessary and relevant;
- (36) Calls on the Member States to help implement this plan;
- (37) Calls for the creation of a European Cancer Institute to coordinate the Union's various cancer initiatives, particularly after 2027, and to support the plans of Member States;
- (38) Recommends that alternative sources of funding be sought as of now and that the possibilities for self-financing of the structures created under the Cancer Plan be examined in order to anticipate the expiry of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework;

- (39) Considers, however, that certain structures will always require EU funding and therefore calls for the maintenance of sufficient funding for the health sector in the next multiannual financial framework;
- (40) *In the field of research*
- (41) Whereas research plays an essential role in the fight against cancer;
- (42) Whereas the Cancer Plan should encourage the use of new technologies in the field of research;
- (43) Whereas it is necessary to strengthen the impact of research on the Cancer Plan;
- (44) Whereas sponsors of clinical trials involving medicinal products and in vitro diagnostic medical devices encounter administrative difficulties;
- (45) Whereas the certification system for in vitro diagnostic medical devices is currently undersized;
- (46) Welcomes the creation of the Knowledge Centre on Cancer, which will, among other things, maintain the European Cancer Inequalities Registry;
- (47) Calls on the Commission to continue to support the Member States in the production of data;
- (48) Supports the initiative to create a European atlas of cancer images and the UNCAN.eu initiative to better understand the disease, both of which should be developed in coordination so that data can be integrated on the same platform;
- (49) Calls on the Commission to simplify the administrative procedures required to respond to calls for projects, in order to enable the smallest structures to benefit from European funds, and to adapt the duration of funding to the projects financed, so as to ensure the sustainability of funding for studies that need to be carried out over the long term;
- (50) Calls on the Commission to support research to better understand the rise in the number of cancer cases in young adults, to develop treatments for rare cancers, including paediatric cancers, and to support therapeutic de-escalation;
- (51) Calls for the revision of Regulation (EU) 2017/745 on medical devices and Regulation (EU) 2017/746 on in vitro diagnostic medical devices in order to facilitate the development of clinical trials within the Union;

- (52) *In the field of prevention*
- (53) Whereas prevention is the most effective way of fighting cancer;
- (54) Whereas 40% of cancer cases in the EU could be avoided;
- (55) Whereas 27% of current cancer cases are attributable to smoking;
- (56) Whereas excessive alcohol consumption is a major public health problem;
- (57) Whereas, in the context of the Cancer Plan, the Commission has undertaken to propose a revision of the Tobacco Products Directive and of legislation on tobacco and alcohol taxation;
- (58) Whereas the Commission has not presented any of the proposals announced;
- (59) Whereas the Commission has adopted Delegated Directive (EU) 2022/2100 to extend the ban on the placing on the market of tobacco products containing flavourings to include heated tobacco products;
- (60) Whereas on 3 December 2024 the Council adopted a recommendation on smoke- and aerosol-free environments;
- (61) Whereas cannabis is the most widely consumed illicit substance in Europe;
- (62) Considering the impact that a healthy, balanced diet can have on health;
- (63) Whereas as part of the "Farm to Fork" strategy and the Cancer Plan, the Commission was planning to make it compulsory to display harmonised nutritional labelling on the front of food packaging and to review the policy on promoting agricultural products;
- (64) Whereas the Commission has not proposed a legislative initiative for this purpose because of a clear disagreement between the Member States;
- (65) Whereas pollution and exposure to dangerous substances cause numerous cancers;
- (66) Whereas on 26 October 2022 the Commission presented the "Zero Pollution" package, the examination of which led to the adoption of Directive (EU)

2024/2881 and Directive (EU) 2024/3019, while the text COM(2022) 540 final is still under discussion;

- (67) Whereas the Commission has taken measures to limit the exposure of workers to asbestos, acrylonitrile, nickel compounds and benzene;
- (68) Whereas environmental factors have an impact on the rise in cancer among young adults;
- (69) Whereas ultraviolet radiation is carcinogenic;
- (70) Whereas vaccination provides benefits against papillomavirus and hepatitis B;
- (71) Calls on the Commission to propose a revision of Directive 2014/40/EU and legislation on the taxation of tobacco products and alcohol in order to reduce consumption;
- (72) Also calls on the Commission to anticipate and regulate the arrival on the market of new products that encourage young people to take up smoking;
- (73) Welcomes the measures proposed by the Council in its Recommendation of 3 December 2024 on smoke- and aerosol-free environments proposing to create more smoke-free environments, and the measures adopted by the Commission under Delegated Directive (EU) 2022/2100 to ban the consumption of heated tobacco products containing flavourings;
- (74) Calls on the Commission to propose an initiative to combat cannabis use;
- (75) Takes note, on the one hand, of the strong opposition of certain Member States to the proposal to create harmonised and compulsory nutritional labelling on food packaging and, on the other hand, of the opposition of a majority of Member States to the initiative to revise the policy on the promotion of agricultural products; and, consequently, calls upon the Commission to present new initiatives that might receive the support of the Member States;
- (76) Welcomes the adoption of the measures proposed by the Commission to reduce pollution and exposure to carcinogens at work;
- (77) Hopes that the European Parliament and the Council will be able to reach an agreement to adopt text COM(2022) 540 in order to reduce water pollution;

- (78) Calls on the Commission to consider appropriate preventive measures to limit the rise in cancer among young adults;
- (79) Calls for stricter regulations on the use of sunbeds for cosmetic purposes;
- (80) Supports the implementation of the Council's recommendations on vaccine-preventable cancers, in particular the proposed vaccination programmes;
- (81) *Supporting the early detection of cancer*
- (82) Whereas detecting cancer at an early stage considerably increases the chances of survival and allows the use of less invasive and less toxic treatments for patients;
- (83) Whereas on 9 December 2022 the Council adopted a Recommendation on strengthening prevention through early detection of cancer;
- (84) Whereas the Commission has provided support to the Member States for the implementation of this recommendation;
- (85) Whereas there are inequalities between Member States and within Member States that are linked in particular to socio-economic levels;
- (86) Whereas some cancers are hereditary;
- (87) Whereas ageing of the population will lead to an increase in the incidence of cancer;
- (88) Whereas it is necessary to continue to develop screening methods that can be implemented easily and at a lower cost;
- (89) Supports the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 9 December 2022 on strengthening prevention through early detection of cancer, in particular its extension to lung, prostate and stomach cancer, as well as the updating of the recommendations on breast, cervical and colorectal cancer;
- (90) Requests that the screening programmes implemented aim to reduce inequalities in early detection;
- (91) Hopes that these programmes will target people at risk of hereditary cancer and the elderly;

- (92) Calls for further development of non-invasive screening methods;
- (93) *Concerning healthcare provision and quality of life for cancer patients and survivors*
- (94) Whereas the provision of health care falls within the competence of the Member States;
- (95) Whereas the Commission has taken initiatives, in particular to structure a network of national cancer centres and to develop cooperation between health establishments through networks of expertise and reference networks;
- (96) Whereas the Commission wishes to build on this cooperation to implement the "Helping Children with Cancer" initiative;
- (97) Whereas the Commission has taken initiatives to develop personalised medicine and secure the supply of radioisotopes;
- (98) Whereas modern equipment is essential for the quality of screening and care;
- (99) Whereas the cohesion funds and national recovery and resilience plans play an essential role in enabling the development of care infrastructures and the purchase of equipment;
- (100) Whereas the shortage of nursing staff is threatening the viability of healthcare throughout Europe;
- (101) Whereas there have been various initiatives by the Commission to support access to care and improve quality of life for cancer patients and survivors;
- (102) Whereas the Commission has entered into discussions with financial institutions with a view to creating a code of conduct to advance the right to be forgotten for cancer patients and allow them easier access to financial services, loans or insurance;
- (103) Supports the actions taken by the Commission to develop healthcare provision, in particular the national cancer centres and the various networks that will support the "Helping Children with Cancer" initiative;
- (104) Stresses the essential role of cohesion policy in financing health infrastructure and facilities, and therefore calls for an ambitious envelope to be maintained in the next multiannual financial framework to fund this policy;

- (105) Calls on the Commission to propose initiatives to remedy the shortage of oncologists, in particular by supporting initiatives by Member States to develop telemedicine;
- (106) Considers the SAMIRA action plan to support access to radiotherapy, the "Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment for All" initiative to develop personalised medicine, and the creation of a smart card containing the clinical history of cancer survivors to be particularly relevant;
- (107) Calls for the creation of a European right to be forgotten for cancer survivors.