

8 POLICY ACTIONS

TO PREVENT CANCER THROUGH VACCINATION

THE BURDEN OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE CANCERS:

Cancer causes 1 in 4 deaths in Europe.¹ In 2020, 2.7 million people were diagnosed with cancer.² The portion of these cancers that can be attributed to carcinogenic infections is 13%.³ Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Hepatitis B (HBV) are among the most important infections associated with cancer for which vaccines are available.



In Europe, **53.000 new cervical cancer cases** can be attributed to HPV infection annually.⁴ Other HPV related cancers include head and neck, vulvar, vaginal, anal, and oropharyngeal cancer.



Hepatitis B causes liver cancer, a cancer that accounts for **60.000 deaths of Europeans** on a yearly basis.⁵

But both HPV and HBV infections can be prevented by vaccines.

THE WINDOW OF POLICY OPPORTUNITY:

To overcome low and inequitable vaccine uptake and reduce the burden of cancer, the European Commission included vaccination standards and goals for both HPV and HBV in its Europe's Beating Cancer Plan (EBCP). Additionally, the Commission is sending a clear message by drafting a Council Recommendation on vaccine- preventable cancers, a unique opportunity for Europe to accelerate its battle against cancer.

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES:

With ambitious and appropriate action taken by all stakeholders – policymakers, civil society and industry – we strive to meet the overarching objectives of increasing uptake of HPV and Hepatitis B vaccines, and translating this eventually into a reduction in the burden of related cancers on Europe's citizens and health systems.

Signed by:



Nicolás González Casares
(S&D, Spain)



Alessandra Moretti
(S&D, Italy)



Ivars Ijabs
(Renew, Latvia)



Romana Jerkovic
(S&D, Croatia)



Nicolae Ștefănuță
(Renew, Romania)

We call for the EU and all Member States to take immediate action towards fulfilling the goal of eliminating vaccine preventable cancers by prioritizing following actions:

1

Member States to update their National Cancer Control Plans and ensure HPV and HBV vaccination are included in **routine vaccination** schedules.

5

Member States to adopt public health strategies to address missed vaccinations during COVID-19, in particular for affected school cohorts for HPV vaccination, and adults at greatest risk of Hepatitis B.

2

The European Commission, the ECDC and Member States to strengthen work on data collection related to HPV and Hepatitis B vaccination, ensuring that this is consistent **across Member States and follows a systematic approach** through national registries; Member States and the European Commission to monitor disparities and track progress of implementation of EBCP targets.

6

Member States to **maximize HPV vaccination coverage** and reach the 90% target for girls and include boys in national schedules. **The European Commission** to expand recommendations and objectives beyond cervical cancer to target other HPV related cancers.

3

Member States need to set up **alternative vaccination sites** to increase vaccination uptake especially for high-risk population groups.

7

Member States to develop and provide adequate funding for specific Hepatitis B action plans to increase vaccination rates, as one third of all EU/EEA countries currently have no action plan and nearly half reported there was no funding for implementation.

4

Member States to raise awareness and invest in comprehensive HPV and Hepatitis B information and vaccination campaigns and make use of the available funds at EU level; the **European Commission** to provide additional funding to support these programmes in Member States, including through EU4Health and other mechanisms.

8

Member States to facilitate **access to screening** and minimize delays between prevention and treatment by ensuring to implement and communicate clear screening policies and intensify efforts to reach people not responding to screening invitations.

1. Eurostat, "World cancer day: 1 in 4 deaths caused by cancer", 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20200204-1>.
2. European Commission, "A cancer plan for Europe", https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/european-health-union/cancer-plan-europe_en.
3. de Martel C, Georges D, Bray F, Ferlay J, Clifford GM., "Global burden of cancer attributable to infections in 2018: a worldwide incidence analysis". Lancet Glob Health, 2019, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(19\)30488-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(19)30488-7/fulltext)
4. HPV Centre, "Human Papillomavirus and related diseased report", 2021, <https://hpvcentre.net/statistics/reports/XEX.pdf?t=1637596552197>.
5. MCS Wong et al, "International Incidence and Mortality Trends of Liver Cancer: A Global Profile", 2017, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5374459/>