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**European Cancer
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Press Release

World Cancer Day: European cancer survivors turn policy into action

Brussels, Belgium, February 4, 2018: On the occasion of the World Cancer Day, the European Cancer Patient Coalition, Europe's largest cancer patients' umbrella organisation with more than 400 associations, is highlighting the importance of turning policy into action for the three million people who are diagnosed with cancer in Europe every year. The most impactful way to celebrate this day is to drive the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Action on Cancer Control (CanCon), which were produced by 17 European Member States in collaboration with academia and civil society, including the European Cancer Patient Coalition.

These recommendations support the increasing number of people with cancer throughout the cancer care pathway from prevention, through to treatment and survivorship. The recommendations offer a harmonised, shared and evidence-based plan to enhance our healthcare systems' capacity to fight cancer. Specifically, these recommendations call for:

- Cancer survivors' care to be implemented into National Cancer Plans, with active participation of survivors and relatives;
- Improvement of early detection of patients' and their access to rehabilitation, psychosocial and palliative care services;
- More research into survivorship to provide data on late effects, the impact and cost-effectiveness of rehabilitation and other care interventions.

Significant disparities in survivorship are still present in Europe, despite survival rates improving due to awareness, early diagnosis and innovative treatments. Over 14.5 million Europeans are living with cancer today, and cancer is increasingly becoming a manageable chronic illness for many people. Cancer survivors need comprehensive survivorship care, rehabilitation and support to find new pathways to a satisfactory life going forward and their return to work.

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more

The European Cancer Patient Coalition President, Francesco De Lorenzo, said:

"In order to achieve this, we must turn policy into action and do it much faster. The first step should be to harmonise National Cancer Plans, as outlined in the Joint Action on Cancer Control (CanCon) recommendations with clear measures that EU governments should implement to make National Cancer Control Plans more resilient and effective. The recommendations set a patient-oriented method not only to make room for new treatments and investments, but also to better allocate the scarce resources available into those interventions that make a real difference to cancer patients. We hope that the policymakers in all of the 17 countries that have signed up to the recommendations will agree with us to improve access to cancer care."

On the basis of the recommendations from the Joint Action on Cancer Control (CanCon), the European Cancer Patient Coalition has developed a practical guide for patients, which is an example of collaborative work of turning policy into tangible actions that benefit people with cancer.

The "Patient Guide on Survivorship" was produced by the European Cancer Patient Coalition and the European Society for Medical Oncology, in collaboration with the International Psycho-Oncology Society. This practical guide includes sections on cancer rehabilitation, patient support groups, psychological support, and the role of the health care professionals in the provision of these services. The guide also contains a survivorship checklist that people with cancer can use in collaboration with their healthcare team in order to facilitate the return to a normal life. Survivorship is a unique and ongoing experience, which is different for each person and those close to them.

On the occasion of the World Cancer Day, the European Cancer Patient Coalition distributed the "Patient Guide on Survivorship" to key Members of the European Parliament. Using the guide as an example, the European Cancer Patient Coalition is meeting with policymakers to remind them that policy must be turned into action that benefits people living with cancer.

In support of the World Cancer Day, organised by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), the European Cancer Patient Coalition endorses the 'We can. I can.' campaign, encouraging its members and community to do their part to reduce the global impact of cancer. Cancer affects everyone in different ways, and cancer patient organisations must call on policymakers and health professionals to take action to support cancer survivors and their families.

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

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About Cancer

Cancer is a group of diseases that involves increased cell growth, with the potential to spread to other parts of the body, and is one of the largest global public health concerns. Each year in Europe, there are an estimated 3.45 million new cases of cancer and 1.75 million deaths from cancer. Of the 17.9 million people living with cancer in the European Union, nearly one quarter (24%) have a rare cancer, equivalent to over 4.3 million people. The most common cancers are breast cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, and lung cancer. Approximately 20% of deaths are caused by cancer in the WHO European Region, and the most common causes of death from cancer are lung cancer, colorectal cancer, breast cancer, stomach cancer, and pancreatic cancer.

About the European Cancer Patient Coalition

The European Cancer Patient Coalition is an umbrella organisation of over 400 cancer patient organisations in 46 countries. The Coalition works for a Europe of equality, where all European cancer patients have timely and affordable access to the best treatment and care available, throughout their life. The European Cancer Patient Coalition believes that cancer patients are the most important partners in the fight against cancer and against all the cancer-related issues affecting our society. Policy makers, researchers, doctors and industry should recognise cancer patients as co-creators of their own health.