

Press release: Surviving beyond treatment: Cancer patients Make Sense of life after treatment of head and neck cancers.

Make Sense Campaign Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Week

18 September 2017, Brussels, Belgium:

On the advent of the 2017 Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week, the European Cancer Patient Coalition invited patients and policy makers to gather at the European Parliament to promote better quality of life for cancer patients and survivors as part of the Make Sense Campaign. The event was hosted by MEP Lieve Wierinck (ALDE, Belgium). This year's awareness week theme is 'Supporting Survivorship'.

Survivorship requires as much attention from patients and healthcare professionals as the treatment of cancer. The event marked the Campaign's 5th consecutive Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Week. Taking place from 18th to 22nd of September, the campaign is supported and celebrated around Europe, through various activities.

Supporting survivorship and rare cancers have been some of the European Cancer Patient Coalition's main objectives for several years, which has been transformed into tangible actions, such as the ESMO-ECPC Patient Guide on Survivorship, and the creation of the ECPC Working Group on Rare Cancers to contribute to the Joint Action on Rare Cancers (JARC). This event in the European Parliament, along with other activities from the European Cancer Patient Coalition, ensures that survivorship is recognized as a key component for people affected by head and neck cancers.

During the event, top experts in the field of public health and patient representatives reflected that survivorship requires a consolidated approach from patients and healthcare professionals through the use of policies to support specific needs of people affected by head and neck cancers. Without these policies, the substantial investment in treating cancer patients will not reach the goal of returning patients to normal lives.

"Head and Neck cancers are approximately half as common as lung cancer, but twice as common as cervical cancer. Despite their severity and increasing prevalence within society, there is little awareness of head and neck cancers, and patient outcomes remain very poor" said MEP Lieve Wierinck (ALDE, Belgium), a cancer survivor and a long-standing supporter of cancer patients within the European Parliament. "I am very glad to kick-start the Head and Neck cancer awareness week in Brussels".

"Supporting patients who survive head and neck cancers requires a supportive, long-term, multidisciplinary approach" stated Jana Pelouchova, chronic myeloid leukemia patient and Board Member of the European Cancer Patient Coalition. "The European Cancer Patient Coalition is dedicated to advocating for all cancer survivors throughout Europe".

Clearly in head and neck cancers, the key to survivorship is regaining the important aspects of life before cancer.

Make Sense of Head & Neck Cancer activities are taking place this week across Europe. These activities focus on providing credible, up-to-date information on head and neck cancer to help ensure optimal diagnosis, treatment and survival care.

To find out more information about activities taking place, please visit:
<http://www.makesensecampaign.eu> and click on the interactive map of events.

Press released ends.

About the European Cancer Patient Coalition

The European Cancer Patient Coalition is the largest European cancer patients' umbrella organization.

The European Cancer Patient Coalition is the voice of cancer patients in Europe. With over 400 members, ECPC is Europe's largest umbrella cancer patients' association, covering all 28 EU member states and many other European and non-European countries. The European Cancer Patient Coalition represents patients affected by all types of cancers, from the rarest to the most common.

About the *Make Sense* Campaign

The *Make Sense* campaign, run by the European Head and Neck Society (EHNS), aims to raise awareness of head and neck cancer and ultimately improve outcomes for patients with the disease. It will do this through:

- Education on disease prevention
- Driving understanding of the signs and symptoms of the disease
- Encouraging earlier presentation, diagnosis and referral

The *Make Sense* campaign is supported by Boehringer Ingelheim, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Merck, and Norgine.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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