

Cancer patients stress the importance of systematic patient involvement and mandatory uptake of Joint Clinical Assessments in HTA cooperation

9 July 2018

Brussels, Belgium

Today, the European Cancer Patient Coalition is echoing the voices of cancer patients for further involvement of patients in Health Technology Assessment-related processes. At an event organised by the European Commission on *The Way Forward for HTA cooperation*, Francesco de Lorenzo (ECPC President) and Kathi Apostolidis (ECPC Vice-President) made a firm stance on the need to establish an effective mechanism to guarantee meaningful patient organisation in Health Technology Assessment.

Cancer patients are the most important partners in the fight against cancer. Thus, the European Cancer Patient Coalition has always put forth the case for actively involving patient organisations in all decision-making processes, pertaining to and including that of HTA, for the protection of individual human health and for the overall public health.

As the ECPC President Francesco de Lorenzo has repeatedly stated – *“Patients are the ultimate beneficiaries of medical technologies, and have unique knowledge, perspectives and experiences which must be considered. We believe that mandatory participation and uptake of Joint Clinical Assessments for all Member States is the optimal solution for successful cooperation in the field of Health Technology Assessment.”*

Systematic involvement of patient organisations in Health Technology Assessments is also crucial. That is the reason why the European Cancer Patient Coalition is calling for the formalisation of patient organisation involvement throughout all activities of Health Technology Assessment at EU level, as well as in the assessments of non-clinical domains that are conducted at national level.

“Member States and national HTA agencies should institutionally involve patient organisations’ representatives in HTA procedures and where necessary provide information and training to facilitate meaningful patient involvement. European cancer patients need prompt access to vital new treatments, which the mandatory participation and uptake of Joint Clinical Assessments by all Member States can assure.” said ECPC Vice President, Kathi Apostolidis in a statement following the event.

Health Technology Assessments are increasingly being performed by Member States. However, the wide variety of procedures and methodologies results in significant differences in how data and evidence are assessed. For patients across Europe, this means delays in access to innovative treatments, due to the fragmentation of HTA systems and duplication of work. The European Cancer Patient Coalition strongly welcomes the European Commission's proposal for future cooperation on HTA in Europe, and the aspects of mandatory uptake of clinical assessment reports to ensure equal and timely access to health technologies, whilst expressing concerns about Member States’ diverging positions in the Council.

In particular, the European Cancer Patient Coalition is concerned that this may result in an undesired deadlock which would be extremely detrimental to patients as the current inequalities in availability of health technologies would not be tackled.

The European Cancer Patient Coalition has also published today, the [Position Paper on Future Cooperation on Health Technology Assessment](#).

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Notes to editors:**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.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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