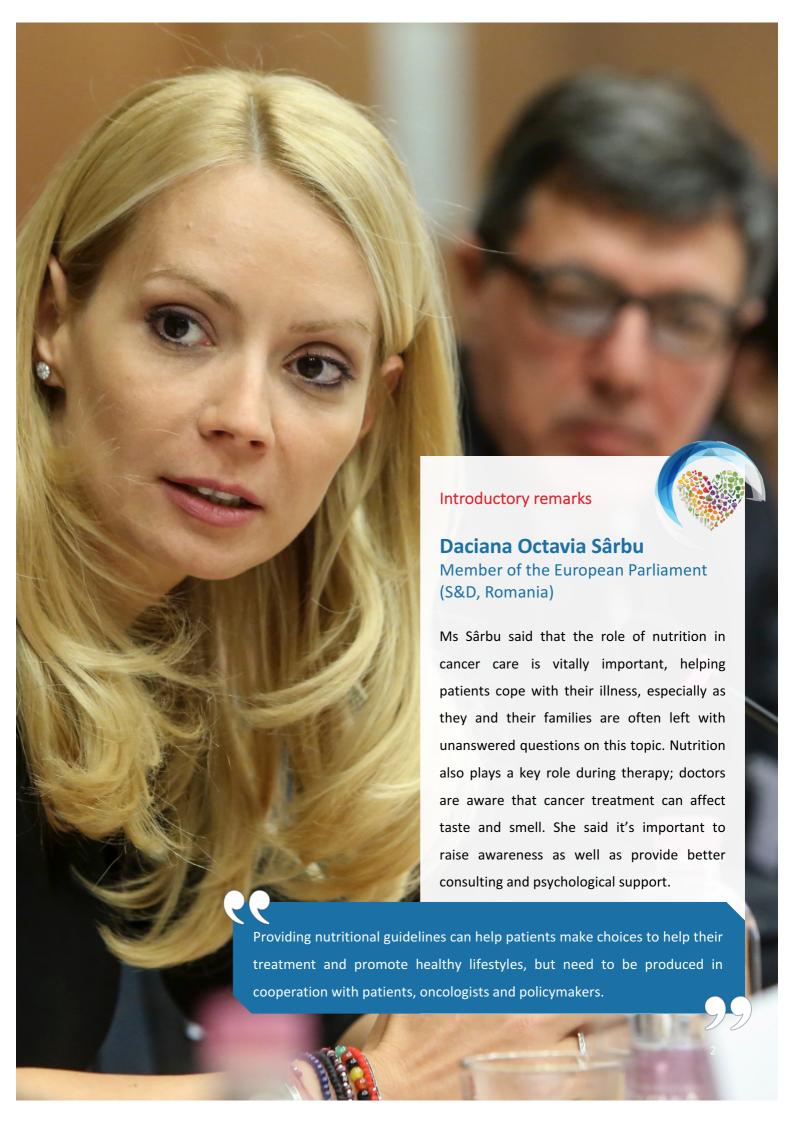
# MEMORANDUM

## THE ROLE OF NUTRITION IN CANCER CARE

9 November 2017, European Parliament, Brussels







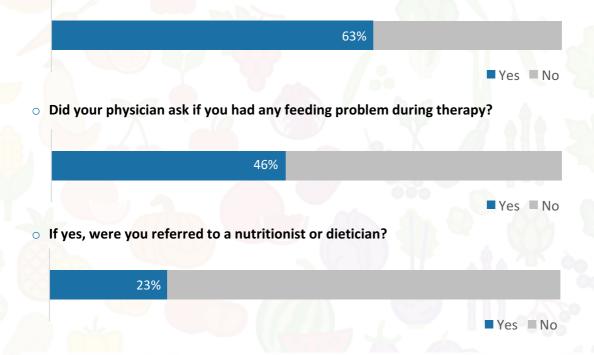






Have you encountered any feeding proble	ems during the illness	and/or therapy?
	70%	
		■Yes ■ No
Is it important to have correct nutrition d	uring therapy?	
		97%
		■Yes ■ No
Did you lose weight during the illness?		
	67%	
		■Yes ■ No
Is the topic of food worrisome for you and	d your family?	
	60%	
		■Yes ■ No
Have you been forced to eat?		
41%		
		■Yes ■ No
Did reduced appetite influence your moo	d?	
	61%	
		■Yes ■ No
Did problems with eating influence your o	daily life and social int	eraction?
	60%	
		■Yes ■ No

Does your physician or oncologist check your weight during a visit?



Professor Muscaritoli gave his analysis of these results. He said that the majority of the respondents experienced feeding problems during illness or therapy. Responders believe that their feeding problems were linked to illness or therapy and that avoiding weight loss during therapy was important. Despite this, a substantial share of the respondents had no information about how to artificially improve or manage nutrition.

A key finding was that physicians are generally not checking the nutritional status of their patients; half of physicians do not pay attention to weight loss or provide any advice to improve appetite. Two-thirds of patients lost weight during illness or therapy; for one-third, this loss was moderate to severe. More than half of them were convinced that this could worsen the side-effects of therapy.

Moreover, only half of physicians are advising maintenance of physical condition. More than half of patients know nothing about the potential negative affect of therapy of taking vitamins and anti-oxidants during treatment.

Almost two-thirds of patients felt that mood was influenced by appetite loss and more than half of them thought that nutritional problems negatively impact their social relations. Almost two-thirds of patients were worried about food problems, and almost half of them thought they were somewhat forced to eat.

In conclusion, Professor Muscaritoli said that patients and physicians have different perspectives on the nutritional aspects of cancer and cancer therapy. "An increased physician focus on nutrition during treatment in addition to providing patients with information on optimising nutrition is essential to improve patients' quality of life and is the first step towards getting better understanding of the problem and how to meet this unmet need of cancer patients."





# Session II: Providing information to all stakeholders

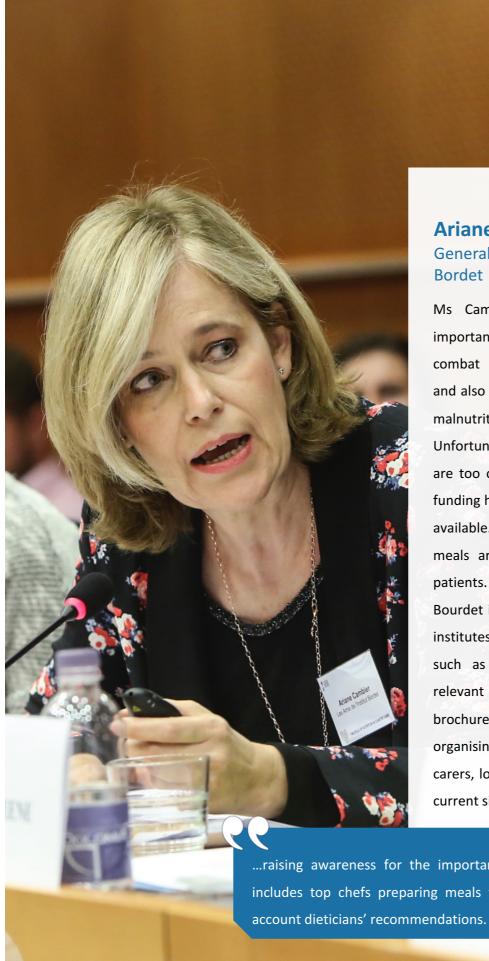
Patient Organizations' role in informing patients and carers

### **Robert Greene**

Founder and President of the HungerNdThirst Foundation in the Netherlands

Mr Greene said that nutrition is important for every cancer patient; a healthy diet includes eating and drinking enough food and liquid to obtain the nutrition that the body needs. He said that the role of patients' organisations is changing, including getting involved to ensure that every cancer patient and carer knows how to find validated information to maintain or improve a healthy diet, with a more patient-centric approach, and to act as a gobetween with pharmaceutical companies, medical nutrition producers, healthcare specialists and the patient. Mr Greene emphasised that the patient's well-being must always be the number one priority. Another important step is to improve the quality of life of all cancer patients, where nutrition plays a major role, including the social and emotional aspects of enjoying a meal with others. He concluded by saying that...

...HungerNdThirst Foundation hopes to act as an example of how patients' organisations can collaborate with others to help address nutritional challenges, including the taste alterations caused by chemotherapy.



## **Ariane Cambier**

General Secretary, Les Amis de l'Institut **Bordet** 

Ms Cambier remarked that nutrition is important for a patient's well-being, to combat the side-effects of chemotherapy, and also from the survivor's point of view, as malnutrition has an impact on survival rates. Unfortunately, she said, physicians and carers are too often unaware of this, while underfunding has led to insufficient dieticians being available. She also believes that hospital meals are insufficiently adapted to cancer patients. Actions of Les Amis d'Institut Jules Bourdet include sending physicians to cancer institutes, developing communication tools such as a quarterly newsletter, inserting relevant articles in mainstream media, a brochure for patients undergoing treatment, organising conferences for patients and carers, lobbying policymakers to improve the current situation, and...

...raising awareness for the importance of nutrition in hospitals, which includes top chefs preparing meals for patients in hospitals taking into

#### **Q&A** session

4200

A representative from industry asked what are ECPC's requests as a patient group to policymakers, and what are they asking to be changed? Professor De Lorenzo said that ECPC's main mission is to try to arrive at guidelines for nutrition for cancer patients, to ensure that medical oncologists will adequately take care of nutrition for cancer patients. Ms Sârbu said that the European Parliament has to push the Commission to get more direct involvement and results on healthy eating: "Currently just a few signals are coming from the Commission; we have to see more results and involvement."

A delegate asked if any research is being conducted on overweight and obesity among cancer patients, and particularly among breast cancer patients. Professor Muscaritoli said that a lot of research is being done on the role of obesity in promoting cancer development, and clear data is available that links obesity increase with the risk of getting cancer. There is also research showing that overweight and obesity after treatment for breast cancer is contributing to increased risk of relapse. As a researcher, Professor Muscaritoli would like to see increased awareness of these problems in the scientific community.

#### Conclusions

Professor De Lorenzo emphasized the need of cancer patient empowerment and a unified effort for the application of existing guidelines in daily oncological settings before Ms Sârbu thanked participants for attending and closed the meeting.







Event organised by ECPC and hosted by MEP Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D, Romania).

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