

EUROPEAN POLICY INITIATIVES ON BC/MBC

Although many EU initiatives on health are at a horizontal level (i.e. focused on health in general rather than specific diseases), cancers with high incidence rates – including breast cancer – have received targeted action in recent years. Until now, early stage breast cancer has been the primary focus of EU policy initiatives.

Moving forward and capitalising on the success of these initiatives, much can and should be done at a policy level to raise awareness of mBC, address these patients' unmet needs, and facilitate their access to support, care, and treatment options. Below is an overview of the key EU policy milestones on breast cancer to date:

EU MILESTONES ON BREAST CANCER

With the establishment of the Committee of Cancer Experts in 1985, the Member States of what was then the European Community began taking action against cancer with the aim to reduce the number of cancer deaths in Europe. One of the most significant early milestones of the EC's work on cancer was the publication of the first edition of the European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Mammography Screening in 1993. More recently, the European institutions have adopted many policy measures focused on breast cancer.



2003: The Council of the European Union (EU) calls for population-wide screening for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer.¹

2003: The European Parliament (EP) calls on governments to support multidisciplinary teams and provide treatment to all women, including by establishing a network of certified multidisciplinary specialised breast centres/units (SBUs).²

2006: The European Guidelines for Assurance in Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis³ are adopted to promote best practice from regional and national breast cancer screening programmes and establish a certification protocol for diagnostic and screening units.

2006: The EP calls on member states to strengthen their efforts in breast cancer research and development (R&D), as well as prevention, screening, management, and treatment.⁴

2009: The European Commission (EC) sponsors the European Partnership for Action Against Cancer (EPAAC) until 2013, to support the efforts of national authorities in tackling cancer in a more efficient way.⁵

EU MILESTONES ON BREAST CANCER /continued



European Parliament
Initiatives



European Commission
Initiatives



Council of the EU
Initiatives

2010: The EP reinforces the EU's commitment to the fight against breast cancer, by ensuring the implementation of screening programmes, the creation of SBUs and reliable data collection.⁶

2011: Start of the EU-funded RATHER project which aims to deliver “a proof-of-concept for novel therapeutic interventions, together with matched personalised diagnostic approaches for ‘triple negative’ and ‘invasive lobular’ breast cancers”.⁷

2012: The EC launches the Initiative on Breast Cancer (ECIBC), to develop a new version of the European Guidelines for Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis, as well as the development of a voluntary European Quality Assurance (QA) scheme for breast cancer services based on EU legislation.⁸

2014: The EC creates the Expert Group on Cancer Control to assist the Commission in drawing up legal and policy instruments, guidelines, and recommendations on cancer control (epidemiology, screening, quality assurance, prevention and clinical research), including in matters of the ECIBC.⁹

2014: The EC launches the Joint Action on Cancer Control (CANCON) responsible for the development of the European Guide on Quality Improvement in Comprehensive Cancer Control.¹⁰

2015: The EP adopts a Written Declaration on the Fight against Breast Cancer specifically calling for mBC patients to “have access to and be treated in, an SBU, and their ongoing needs for care and psychosocial services should be coordinated and supported by the SBU as per the EU Guidelines”.¹¹

References

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- ² European Parliament resolution on breast cancer in the European Union (2002/2279(INI)). 2003. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P5-TA-2003-0270+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>
- ³ European Reference Organisation for Quality Assured Breast Screening and Diagnostics Services. 2006. Available at: <http://www.euref.org/european-guidelines>
- ⁴ European Parliament resolution on breast cancer in the enlarged European Union. 2006. Available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=EN&reference=B6-0528/2006>
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- ⁷ Rational Therapy for Breast Cancer (RATHER). 2011. Available at: <http://www.ratherproject.com/>
- ⁸ European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer: concept document. 2015. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/ecibc_concept_document.pdf
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- ¹⁰ Cancer Control Joint Action. 2014. Available at: <http://www.cancercontrol.eu/>
- ¹¹ Written Declaration submitted under Rule 136 of the Rules of Procedure on the fight against breast cancer in the European Union (PE556.524v01-00). 2015. Available at: <http://www.ecpc.org/Documents/News/WD%20On%20the%20Fight%20Against%20Breast%20Cancer%20in%20the%20EU.pdf>