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## **Working together to fight cancer- President Barroso and Commissioner Vassiliou launch the European Partnership for Action against Cancer**

*Today, in Brussels, over 300 cancer organisations, patients and cancer survivors, health professionals, researchers, health authorities and health ministers gather to mark the official launch of the European Partnership for Action against Cancer. The opening speeches by European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and HRH Princess Mathilde of Belgium highlight the impact of cancer on individuals and, their families. In addition, the importance of talking about cancer, breaking down the barriers of stigma and secrecy which surround some cancers is also raised. Three million people are diagnosed with cancer every year in the EU. It is the second biggest cause of death in both men and women. The Partnership aims to draw together relevant organisations to share expertise, to identify challenges in order to reduce the number of new cancer cases in the EU by 15% by 2020.*

Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said: *"The European Partnership for Action against Cancer will allow us to work together and by this to better use European resources, expertise and means. This represents another expression of the European Union's values, based on responsibility and solidarity, as well as efforts to place people firmly at the heart of our action."*

*"This partnership is about courage and commitment: the courage to speak openly about cancer and the commitment to work together, to trust each other and to share expertise",* said Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner for Health.

EU Research Commissioner, Janez Potočnik said: *"Research against cancer is part of the priorities of the FP7. The partnership shows that we want to 'step up' our efforts to improve EU-wide coordination within this field, in line with the European Research Area. Joining forces and resources in research will make us more efficient".*

### **The launch event of the European Partnership for Action against Cancer**

The launch event takes place in the Wolubilis centre in Brussels. After the opening speeches by President Barroso, Health Commissioner, Androulla Vassiliou and HRH Princess Mathilde of Belgium, the participants will watch a short film – *'Life for Living'*. The film illustrates the experiences, hopes and aspirations of five cancer survivors with different backgrounds, ages and cancers. The participants will also watch a video message by singer Josep Carreras about his own fight against cancer and his hopes for the partnership. Both these films are produced specifically for the launch event.

A panel discussion with cancer experts, the Swedish Health Minister, the Research Commissioner Janez Potocnik and Jo Leinen, president of the European parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety will focus on the four pillars of the partnership: cancer information, early detection and health promotion, cancer research and learning from best practice.

The event will conclude with the unveiling of 27 testimonies from cancer survivors from each EU member state.

### **European Partnership for Action against Cancer**

The Partnership aims to support countries in their efforts to tackle cancer by providing a framework for identifying and sharing information, capacity and expertise in cancer prevention and control. It aims to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including non governmental organisations, researchers, patients groups, industry and national authorities across the EU in a collective effort and with a common commitment to addressing cancer. This partnership approach will also help to avoid scattered actions and the duplication of efforts by contributing to better use of limited resources available.

The Commission policy paper on Action against Cancer, adopted in June 2009 ([IP/09/996](#)) sets out the aims, objectives and actions of the Partnership. After the launch event, preparatory meetings for the Partnership are planned later in the autumn

### **Background on EU action on Cancer**

Since 1985, cancer has been a priority issue for EU public health policy. This priority has been reflected in three successive Europe against Cancer action programmes (1987 to 1989, 1990 to 1994, and 1996 to 2002)

In December 2003, the Council adopted a Recommendation on cancer screening, which sets out fundamental principles of best practice in the early detection of cancer, and invites all Member States to take common action to implement national population-based screening programmes for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer, with appropriate quality assurance at all levels. The Commission has published European guidelines for quality assurance in breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnosis, as benchmarks in this process. On 22nd December 2008, the Commission adopted its Report on the Implementation of the Council Recommendation on cancer screening. ([IP/09/113](#))

European Partnership and further information on EU actions in the field of cancer:

[MEMO/09/293](#)

[MEMO/09/294](#)

To watch the film Life for Living please go to the Partnership website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_information/dissemination/diseases/cancer\\_partnership\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_information/dissemination/diseases/cancer_partnership_en.htm)