



Nothing About Us, Without Us!

PRESS RELEASE

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“Warsaw Declaration”

will save lives say leading cancer patient groups

Brussels, 30.1.2006

Thousands of EU citizens are dying unnecessarily of cancer every year due to existing gaps in cancer care in countries across the EU. In response to these shocking inequalities, 140 cancer patient groups came together at a Summit in Warsaw late last year and produced the “Warsaw Declaration”. Now cancer patients across Europe are calling on policy makers, politicians and other key stakeholders urgently to adopt the “Warsaw Declaration” and set priorities/allocate resources for improving cancer outcomes especially in Central & Eastern (CEE) member states.

The cancer patient Summit was organised by the European Cancer Patient Coalition and two Polish partner organisations - the Res Humanae Foundation and the Polish Institute for Patients’ Rights and Health Education. The **Warsaw Declaration**, produced and endorsed at the Summit, stresses the need to make high-quality, up-to-date prevention, treatment and care equally attainable throughout Europe, especially in the more disadvantaged CEE member states. In addition, the Declaration urges governments to allow greater patient involvement in health policy and health care decisions.

Speaking at the Warsaw Patient Summit, Alojz Peterle, MEP, former Prime Minister of Slovenia and co-chair of the European Parliament Forum **MEPs Against Cancer** said *“The present health inequalities across the EU 25 are unacceptable. Why does lung cancer kill twice as many people in Hungary than in Finland? We must know and act. We will do our best to help patients at EU and national level in their struggle against cancer.”*

CEE cancer patient groups developed the **Declaration** to urge their governments to make cancer control a priority for action to combat the lower cancer survival rates in the region. The **Declaration** encourages appropriate health investment to allow for the implementation of national cancer screening programmes and early diagnosis according to EU standards. It highlights the inadequate health prevention and promotion measures, low cancer awareness and lack of access to high-quality modern treatment and care. *"The low investment in prevention and screening in the CEE countries is shocking. If the EU Council Recommendation on Cancer Screening alone could be taken seriously, this could save thousands of lives in the region"*, said Lynn Faulds Wood, President of the European Cancer Patient Coalition and UK TV presenter.

The Congress was attended by over 230 delegates from 68 organizations representing 14 countries in Europe. Cancer is the second major cause of death in Europe. Two million people are diagnosed with cancer diseases each year, which means that one out of three Europeans develops cancer in their lifetime, and a quarter die from it. According to WHO predictions, cancer is expected to increase to epidemic proportions.

The Warsaw Declaration can be downloaded and signed by all interested parties on the ECPC website www.ecpc-online.org. *"The Declaration will be a most useful instrument for cancer patients, their health professionals and all those in support to lobby national governments for improving cancer control. We are, or soon will be, members of a EU family and therefore have an opportunity to make a united stand against cancer to ensure that everyone gets the best chance of defeating this disease"*. emphasised Hildrun Sundseth, ECPC Head of EU Policy.

PLEASE JOIN OUR ACTION!

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About ECPC

The European Cancer Patient Coalition, launched in September 2003, is an European umbrella organization for cancer patient organisations from the 25 Member States. To date it has over 160 national members, representing the common cancers colorectal, lung, breast, prostate and many rarer cancers. It has been established to represent the views of cancer patients in the European healthcare debate and to provide a forum for European cancer patients to exchange information and share best practices. With its slogan: "Nothing About Us, Without Us", ECPC aims to be the voice of European cancer patients.
<http://www.ecpc-online.org>

About MAC

MAC is an all-party informal group of 43 MEPs committed to promoting action on cancer as a EU priority and harnessing European Health policy to that end. MAC Co-chairs are Adamos Adamou, Liz Lynne, Alojz Peterle

The Warsaw Declaration can be downloaded on the ECPC website
www.ecpc-online.org

The Council Recommendation on Cancer Screening was adopted in December 2003 (OJ L327). It is available on <http://europa.eu.int-celex-txt-32003H0878>

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