

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BEATING CANCER

THE CHAIR

PE (2021) 012728

Dear Madam,
Dear Sir,

With this letter, I would like to sincerely thank you for your very substantial and valuable contribution to the public consultation of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA) on *“The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer prevention, health services and cancer patients and research”* and inform you about the follow-up.

As you know, BECA conducted the online stakeholders’ consultation in February-March 2021 to gain insight into the different ways the COVID-19 pandemic has affected and is still affecting patients, healthcare professionals and all other aspects of cancer care and research in the European Union. Its aim was in particular to provide a framework for proposals for short-term and sustainable solutions and for future health crises (e.g. disease preparedness) to ensure continuity of cancer services, also taking into account Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan. The public consultation yielded contributions from stakeholders from the cancer community and public health organisations across Europe, representing over 360 organisations.

I would like to express my deep gratitude for the time and the effort you devoted to inform BECA Members of your experiences and recommendations. The received input is extremely valuable for the final BECA report, expected at the end of this year.

I have the pleasure of sending you the synopsis report that we prepared to summarize the main findings and recommendations of the survey, *“The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer prevention, health services and cancer patients and research: lessons from a public health crisis”*. We hope it can serve as a useful reference guide. It is also available on the dedicated [BECA COVID-19 consultation webpage](#).

BECA Members will discuss the results of the public consultation on 10 May from 11.15 - 12.00. The exchange of views can be followed live, or watched again later, via the [web streaming services](#) of the European Parliament.

The findings and recommendations of the BECA survey teach us important lessons about how to make our health systems more resilient to ensure continuity of cancer care at all times. I would like to highlight some of the key messages of the synopsis report.

- First, respondents stressed the need to build more resilient and equal health systems for disease and crisis preparedness across the EU. Here lies a crucial task for both the EU and its Member States, which has also been underlined by leading experts during the BECA hearings.
- Second, we need to find ways to increase and improve cross-border collaboration for cancer prevention programmes and other cancer services. This will help to tackle health inequalities within and between Member States, not only in cancer prevention, but also in screening, diagnosis and treatment.
- Another crucial point is the need to increase and strengthen our specialised medical workforce. The pandemic has not only revealed the shortages of medical specialists, but also further exposed health inequalities between EU Member States.
- Finally, I would like to emphasise the point of shortages of crucial medicines during the pandemic. Clearly, there is a need for a mechanism to help prevent and mitigate disruptions to the supply of crucial medicines in all Member States.

Overall, there was clear consensus among respondents that a “holistic approach” should be adopted in the fight against cancer, by involving all relevant stakeholders. I can wholeheartedly endorse this call. From the very beginning, it has been the mission of the Beating Cancer Committee to work together with other politicians, the cancer community, public health organisations and medical experts and to do all we can to ensure that cancer patients receive the treatment they need.

I hope we can continue our excellent cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Bartosz ARŁUKOWICZ

Encl: Synopsis report of the public consultation “*The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer prevention, health services and cancer patients and research: lessons from a public health crisis*”.