

WHAT ROLE CAN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PLAY IN EUROPE'S BEATING CANCER PLAN?

Best Practices on Cancer Prevention across Europe

Tuesday 29 September, 16:30 – 19:00

On 29 September 2020, I-Com hosted a roundtable, titled: *“What role can the European Parliament play in Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan? Best practices on cancer prevention across Europe.”*

The event – organised in cooperation with MEP **Dolors Montserrat** - offered a platform for an open and transparent debate by bringing together fifty high level participants among EU and national key decision makers, research, academic and medical experts, representatives from business and civil society organisations. The roundtable discussed how the European Parliament can contribute to shaping the EU’s flagship initiative - Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan, particularly focusing on best practices for cancer prevention. In particular, as environmental attributes increase the likelihood of cancer, this discussion focussed on methods to improve sustainable mobility, implement healthy nutrition plans, promotion and use of alternative products to tobacco and alcohol, as well as improved access to green areas.

The event was also the occasion to present the **study** developed by I-Com *“Best practice tools to prevent cancer across Europe: Could harm reduction policies play a pivotal role?”*, which compares best practice tools to prevent cancer across Europe to look to as an example in the drafting of the Cancer Plan and analyses the answers submitted to the public consultation, which I-Com submitted to.

After an opening address from **Stefano da Empoli**, President of I-Com and Dolors Montserrat, da Empoli read out a keynote speech from **Margaritis Schinas**, European Commissioner Vice President for Promoting our European Way of Life. **Eleonora Mazzoni**, I-Com’s Head of Innovation Area, then presented the results of the study to the roundtable. The key findings which were highlighted include: Harm reduction policies, if adopted in specific sectors (alcohol, tobacco, nutrition), could play a key role in cancer prevention and policies should be promoted that actively encourage EU citizens to choose a healthier lifestyle and diet, to exercise and to avoid certain behaviour. In addition, national and European stakeholders have a pivotal role to play in the Cancer Plan and we should recognise the best practices highlighted in this paper to leverage the success of the Member States at a European level.

An open exchange followed the presentation of the study’s findings. During the open discussion, stakeholders expressed their widespread interest in and support for the harm reduction policies and best practice examples in I-Com’s study. Among the speakers were MEPs **Peter Liese**, Coordinator for

EPP Group in the ENVI Committee, **Pietro Fiocchi**, Member of the EP Special Committee on Beating Cancer, and **Aldo Patriciello**, Co-Chair of the European Parliament's Challenge Cancer Intergroup.

Clive Bates, an expert on public health who was formerly Director of Action on Smoking and Health in the UK and a member of Tony Blair's Strategy Unit highlighted that deaths from smoking-induced cancers account for 20% of all avoidable cancer deaths in the EU and pointed out the extraordinary potential of alternatives to combustible cigarettes such as vaping devices and snus and their potential to reduce these deaths. **Heino Stöver**, Professor for Social Scientific Addiction Research, at the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, also emphasised the importance of tobacco harm reduction policy and the need to reduce harms caused by alcohol consumption. **Alba Colmenar Romero**, Medical Specialist in Radiation Oncology at La Paz University Hospital in Madrid, highlighted the patient's perspective on the EU Beating Cancer Plan and said harm reduction forms a key part of that mindset. **Konstantinos Poulas**, Associate Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Patras, Greece, underlined the importance of including tobacco harm reduction policy in the Beating Cancer Plan.

After the open discussion, a Q&A session took place. **Michael Landl**, Director of the World Vapers' Alliance, asked the MEPs how likely it is that vaping will be included in the Beating Cancer Plan and whether they would support the inclusion of vaping in the Plan. **Ulrich Adam**, Director General of spiritsEUROPE and **Mariann Skar**, General Secretary of Eurocare, both highlighted how alcohol harm reduction measures could play a role in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the willingness of industry to cooperate with the Commission in the Plan's development.

Marabella Bruno, speaking on behalf of MOIGE, an Italian organisation representing parents, gave their view on how promoting a healthy lifestyle for children can help prevent cancer, particularly in protecting under-18s from alcohol and tobacco consumption. **Anders Milton**, a Member of the Scientific Advisory Board of Pharmaciolo, highlighted the role that alternatives to cigarettes, like snus, could play in prevention and highlighted how Europe should follow the Swedish tobacco harm reduction example, as the country has successfully seen smoking-induced cancer cases reduce dramatically due to uptake of snus.

The roundtable was closed with the final remarks by MEPs **Tomislav Sokol**, Member of the EP Special Committee on Beating Cancer; and **Alessandra Moretti**, also Co-Chair of the European Parliament's Challenge Cancer Intergroup.

I-Com welcomes the interventions from speakers as well as the audience and calls on all interested parties to join the dialogue and agree recommendations for a manifesto to support the work of the European Parliament and all parties involved in the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.