



PRESS RELEASE

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Survivorship in cancer needs innovation in health care CanCon Joint Action calls for policy dialogue

**The European wide effort on cancer control will concentrate on survivorship in its first policy conference
13 May on Brussels, Belgium.**

The aim of this first policy conference is to generate a policy dialogue on how we all can raise cancer survival and reduce cancer mortality by improving the quality of life of cancer patients and survivors.

This first Policy Conference was opened by Mr **Markku Markkula**, the President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), hosting the event. He is an expert of innovation processes and policy development.

“Health care innovation rises from the everyday needs of the citizens”, said Mr Markkula. The Committee of Regions is a voice of regions and cities in Europe.

“Testing health care innovation not only locally but in collaboration with other European regions enables new techniques to be transferred to national and international use in finding innovative treatments for cancer. This is especially important if we are to improve survivorship.”

Mr Markkula added that more funding is needed especially on the so called ‘Proof-of-Concept’ phase for clinical testing.

Survivorship high on the agenda, says cancer expert

“Increasingly, cancer patients are overcoming their disease. This is why we chose survivorship as the main theme of the first policy conference of CanCon Joint Action. CanCon means cancer control. This joint action develops policy solutions for the member states of the European Union”, says Dr **Sakari Karjalainen**, Secretary General of the Cancer Society of Finland and Board member of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL), the co-organiser for this policy conference.

“Our specific goal is to produce a guide on quality improvement in comprehensive cancer control. Hundreds of cancer experts are collaborating in this endeavour”, Dr Karjalainen adds.

The CanCon Policy Conference aims to update key stakeholders on the Joint Action efforts after one year and it is calling upon decision-makers and policy influencers from European institutions to support cancer control efforts.



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The importance of data

Speaking on the issue of data and the vital role it can play to progress cancer research, Professor **Michel Coleman** said “before the European Union can make rational policy to meet the needs of cancer survivors, it must have reliable information on trends and international variations in cancer survival, and the number of cancer survivors (prevalence). Cancer registries are the only source of such information. The current draft of the EU Regulation on data transfer, now in "trilogue" negotiations between Parliament, Commission and Council, remains a serious threat to the viability of cancer registries - it is not possible to obtain informed written consent from 3 million cancer patients a year. The EU must ensure that public health research is protected. Without data on the cancer burden that registries provide, policy-makers will be flying blind.”

CanCon is a joint action initiative, co-funded by participating institutes, organisations, universities and health care units, and the European Union. It started in 2014 and will continue until 2017.

www.cancercontrol.eu

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