



LTPC MANIFESTO FOR THE EU ELECTIONS

2024

The activities of the Let's Talk Prostate Cancer Expert Group are funded by Astellas Pharma Inc., Amgen Inc. and Pfizer Inc., which collectively contribute to and support the goals and objectives of the Expert Group.

About LTPC

The content of this manifesto is informed by the Let's Talk Prostate Cancer (LTPC) Expert Group. The LTPC Expert Group is a collaborative initiative that unites stakeholders at the EU level who have a common goal of advocating for policy changes and promoting education and awareness around prostate cancer.

Since its establishment in 2018, the LTPC Expert Group has been working to bring attention to the challenges faced by people with prostate cancer in Europe such as late detection and diagnosis, limited or unequal access to treatment, and stigma.

The initiative is also active at national level, cooperating with local actors in several Member States: in 2022 the LTPC Expert Group has collaborated with the Italian organisation Fondazione Onda to disseminate information materials on prostate cancer including a poster on risk factors and the main prevention strategies. In November 2022, the event "Falemos do cancro de prostata" (Let's Talk Prostate Cancer in Galician) took place in the Galician Parliament

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Prostate cancer is a persistent, major challenge

Within the European Union, over two million individuals are currently facing prostate cancer, making it the most diagnosed male cancer.^{1,2}

The incidence of prostate cancer is on the rise: Approximately 470,000 new cases were diagnosed in Europe in 2020, a substantial increase from the 345,000 new cases reported in 2012.^{3,4}

The impact of prostate cancer extends beyond its toll on health, exerting a substantial economic burden of over €9 billion annually in the EU, with direct healthcare expenses accounting for €5.8 billion.⁵ However, there is hope in the potential for prevention as well as timely intervention during the early stages, which can mitigate complications and disease progression, offering a chance to enhance the quality of life and minimise the risk of unnecessary overtreatment.⁶

Initiatives like Europe's Beating Cancer Plan play a crucial role in addressing prostate cancer at each stage of the disease, providing the needed guidance for improving customised and risk-based screening and enhancing treatment. In September 2022, a notable milestone was achieved in the EU's efforts to address disparities in cancer diagnosis and treatment. An updated draft Council Recommendation on cancer screening was released,

extending recommended screening programs to cover prostate cancer.⁷ However, it is essential to acknowledge that the scope of the initial proposal concerning prostate cancer screening was narrowed down by the Council of Ministers,⁸ despite being based on scientific evidence presented by the EU's Scientific Advice Mechanism.⁹

The narrowing down of the scope of the initial proposal showcases the need for further awareness raising and advocacy on European and national levels about the benefits of prostate cancer screening based on scientific evidence as it was detailed in the initial proposal. This could build on already existing work in this direction, such as Praise-u,¹⁰ a project conducted by the European Association of Urology and aimed at reducing morbidity and mortality caused by prostate cancer through smart early detection.

A number of challenges for prostate cancer patients still remain unaddressed in the EU such as late diagnoses, unequal access to treatment, stigma associated with symptoms and comorbid conditions, and fragmented care. These challenges necessitate focused attention and care.

It is evident that prostate cancer demands attention across various aspects of health, encompassing not only customised and risk-based screening and treatment but also considering social and mental well-being. In this sense, the upcoming implementation of the European strategy on mental health has the potential to recognise and address the impact of prostate cancer on patients, their families, and caregivers.

1 European Association of Urology, White paper on prostate cancer, recommendations of the EU cancer plan to tackle prostate cancer 2020. Available at: https://uroweb.org/wp-content/uploads/EAU_PCa-WhitePa-per-FINAL-VERSION.pdf. Last accessed July 2023.

2 Bratt O, Auvinen A, Arnsrud Godtman R, et al. Screening for prostate cancer: evidence, ongoing trials, policies and knowledge gaps. *BMJ Oncology* 2023;2:e000039. doi:10.1136/bmjonc-2023-000039

3 The Global Cancer Observatory. 2022. Fact Sheet on Prostate Cancer 2020. EUROPE SPECIFIC DATA. Available at: <https://gco.iarc.fr/today/data/factsheets/cancers/27-Prostate-factsheet.pdf>. Last accessed July 2023. Centre for Parliamentary Studies (2015). Epidemiology of prostate cancer in Europe.

4 Centre for Parliamentary Studies. 2015. Epidemiology of prostate cancer in Europe. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC101382>. Last accessed July 2023.

5 European Association of Urology, White paper on prostate cancer, recommendations of the EU cancer plan to tackle prostate cancer 2020. Available at: https://uroweb.org/wp-content/uploads/EAU_PCa-WhitePa-per-FINAL-VERSION.pdf. Last accessed July 2023.

6 European Association of Urology. 2019. Policy Paper on PSA screening for prostate cancer. Available at: https://www.europa-uomo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/71706_EAU_policy-briefing_PSA.pdf. Last accessed July 2023.

7 European Commission. 2021. Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. Available at: https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/eu_cancer-plan_en_0.pdf. Last accessed July 2023.

8 European Cancer Organisation. 2022. Open Letter on Screening to EU and

National Level Decision-Makers. Available at: <https://www.europeancancer.org/screening>. Last accessed July 2023.

9 Scientific Advice Mechanism. Cancer screening in the European Union. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/519a9bf4-9f5b-11ec-83e1-01aa75ed71a1>. Last accessed July 2023.

10 European Association of Urology. PRAISE-U. Available at <https://uroweb.org/praise-u>. Last accessed August 2023.

Outstanding issues which need to be addressed in the 2024-2029 mandate

To effectively address the challenges posed by prostate cancer, it is imperative to prioritise the following key needs within the 2024-2029 mandate:

Drive a mental health debate relevant for men's health

The upcoming implementation of the European strategy on mental health should prioritise addressing the specific challenges faced by individuals dealing with prostate cancer. In addition to the physical aspect, prostate cancer and its treatment cause emotional distress, anxiety, and isolation. A comprehensive strategy is needed that focuses on mental health support for prostate cancer patients. This includes psychological assistance, counselling, and incorporating sex therapy into the treatment and care pathway to address sexual function and relationship challenges. By proactively addressing mental health, the EU can significantly improve the overall quality of life for affected individuals and their families, making mental health an integral part of comprehensive care.

Expand the Beating Cancer Plan (BCP) to address prostate cancer

The Beating Cancer Plan should incorporate a systematic approach to prostate cancer, similar to the breast and colorectal cancer strategies.¹¹ This involves launching a European Initiative on Prostate Cancer, establishing guidelines and quality assurance measures. These measures ensure timely access to high-quality services, promote early risk-based screening programmes, adopt a multidisciplinary approach, and engage healthcare professionals for coordinated care. A clear roadmap must be created to enhance care, address rising treatment demand, and implement strong monitoring mechanisms for tracking progress. Additionally, there is a necessity to update national cancer control plans, especially in Member States that have not done so in over a decade, leading to fragmentation of the ambitions of the EU and the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan across the EU.

Develop a comprehensive strategy on men's health

A focused strategy on men's health is crucial due to the multifaceted challenges they face, including prostate cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes.¹² Men experience higher mortality rates influenced by occupational hazards and societal taboos.¹³ To tackle male-specific cancers and diseases, a European strategy on men's health should unite efforts across Member States, break the silence surrounding men's non-communicable diseases, promote prevention and early detection, advocate for increased research funding, and create personalized pathways for prostate cancer patients. By doing so, the European Union can improve overall well-being and outcomes for men in the region.

EU funding for the implementation of screening in all Member States

To ensure timely diagnosis and effective management, it's essential to allocate sufficient funding for risk-based prostate cancer screening programs across all Member States. Investing in customised and risk-based screening efforts not only promotes preventive healthcare practices but also enhances the prospects of successful treatment. Through systematic risk-based screening initiatives, individuals can be identified in the early stages of prostate cancer, enabling healthcare providers to deliver timely and appropriate treatment before the condition progresses to more advanced and potentially harder-to-treat stages. Ultimately, this contributes to improved survival rates and reduces the burden on healthcare systems and society. Utilising funds available under the EU4Health programme and Horizon Europe to implement actions in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan will advance progress in this field, reducing the burden of prostate cancer and enhancing overall healthcare outcomes.

¹¹ European Commission. European Commission Initiatives on Breast and Colorectal Cancer. Available at <https://healthcare-quality.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>. Last accessed August 2023.

¹² World Health Organization (WHO). Global Health Estimates 2019: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex, by Country and by region, 2000-2019. Available at: https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/gho-documents/global-health-estimates/gh2019_cod_who-region_2000_20195a48bd71-f222-4b00-90e6-b5078fbfc4db_e01200f2-71ae-47bd-a344-03f4647f8127.xlsx?sfvrsn=4aed7378_7. Last Accessed July 2023.

¹³ Marmot M, Allen J, Bell R, Bloomer E, Goldblatt P, 2012, WHO European review of social determinants of health and the health divide. Consortium for the European Review of Social Determinants of Health and the Health Divide, Last Accessed 19 May 2023, Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22964159/>. Last Accessed July 2023.

The LTPC Commitment

Let's Talk Prostate Cancer (LTPC) is dedicated to improving patient outcomes for prostate cancer. To this end, we will continue working closely and in full transparency with EU policymakers to address the ambitions of our Call to Action at the EU level over the next mandate. We cherish the growing participation of MEPs in the LTPC initiative, and we will fully support activities initiated in the upcoming mandate that align with our shared goals.

The MEP Declaration

Prostate Cancer requires horizontal, unwavering support from MEPs throughout the forthcoming mandate. To achieve this crucial goal, I will support the prioritisation of the goals in this manifesto to improve the disease outcomes for European patients.

In the next mandate, I will actively collaborate with stakeholders to drive efforts to address the growing burden for prostate cancer patients in Europe, and I commit to raising my voice for the prostate cancer community in the upcoming legislature.

Room for signatures

