



Press Release

Transforming Breast Cancer Together: A Call for Change

Brussels, 29 March 2018 – MEPs Lieve Wierinck (ALDE), Elena Gentile (S&D) and Cristian Silviu Buşoi (EPP), representing the three main political groups in the European Parliament, together with key organisations active in this area, have launched a Call for Change to transform breast cancer care in the EU.

Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women and European women's probability of developing breast cancer over a lifetime is approximately 1 in 8. In the advanced stages, breast cancer is incurable although treatable and the personal, social and working relationships of women suffering from the disease, at all stages, are deeply damaged.

Breast cancer and advanced breast cancer remain a serious threat to women, families and European society. “Women diagnosed with breast cancer experience a traumatic event which has devastating repercussions on all the aspects of their life” said MEP Lieve Wierinck, “from social activities, to professional career and personal relationships, women’s quality of life is strongly impacted when they have to fight against the associated depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, loss of appetite, lack of interest in life, pain and fatigue”.

This powerful statement thus calls on EU institutions, EU Member States’ authorities and all relevant stakeholders to invest more in breast cancer prevention, treatment and care in order to ensure that breast cancer is screened, diagnosed and treated in early stages and to significantly improve the quality of life and emotional well-being of patients and their families.

In this vein, the Call for Change issues nine policy recommendations which would significantly ameliorate cancer treatment and care in the EU. In particular, the important need for early screening is underlined, as detecting the disease early can strongly increase chances for survival and minimal disruption of the everyday life. MEP Elena Gentile affirms that “increasing screening rates for people below 50 years old and in areas where there is perhaps a misperception of the risks is crucial to fight breast cancer burden in Europe”.

Indeed, still today considerable disparities in screening and care persist in the EU with worrying discrepancies among and within countries. An “unacceptable situation” according to MEP Buşoi, which declares that “this call for change echoes the need to promote policies that ensure cancer care and resources prioritization, fighting inconsistencies and disparities across Europe in care delivery.”

The Call for Change is supported by Europa Donna – The European Breast Cancer Coalition, the European Cancer Patient Coalition, the European School of Oncology, GE Healthcare, Helsinn, Novartis Oncology, and Working With Cancer.

This call for change is part of the “String of Pearls on Breast Cancer” initiative that wants to reaffirm clear objectives to improve services for women in an area still of high unmet medical need, launched following a successful event in the European Parliament on 8 November 2017. Any organisation committed to improve cancer care in Europe is welcome to join this common effort.