



PRESS RELEASE

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"Forum Against Cancer Europe" (FACE) launched in the European Parliament, supported by more than 50 MEPs

On 23 June a new initiative of the European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC) entitled *Forum Against Cancer Europe (FACE)* was successfully launched at the European Parliament. The *Forum Against Cancer Europe (FACE)* has been set up to continue the successful dialogue of the European cancer patient community with European Parliamentarians, Commission and all concerned stakeholders. It was launched with a workshop entitled *"More Cancer Research Needed in the EU: Cancer Affects Almost Every Family"*. The meeting was hosted by MEP Marisa Matias and featured high level speakers from the European Parliament, EU Commission, research community and patient groups. Already 54 MEPs are supportive of the new FACE initiative.

With hardly any family spared from cancer and with Europe having a strong influence on many health issues on the national level, it is vital that the battle against cancer is a political priority for the European Parliament and other European Institutions.

The *Forum Against Cancer Europe* is an initiative by the European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC). ECPC represents more than 300 cancer patient groups across 42 countries, most in the EU Member States. ECPC is a truly patient-led organisation, run and governed by a volunteer Board of 9 cancer survivors from 9 different countries and a Director who has cancer.

The *Forum Against Cancer Europe (FACE)* has been set up to continue the successful dialogue of the European cancer patient community with European Parliamentarians and put the emphasis on cancer patients. It aims to learn about, debate and form policies geared towards cancer patients across cancers, regions and political parties. FACE is committed to promoting action against cancer as an EU priority. This needs political will and it is vital that strong Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) continue to address cancer. 54 MEPs are already showing their face by officially supporting FACE.

The launch event of FACE took place on 23 June 2010 and was entitled ***"More Cancer Research Needed in the EU: Cancer Affects Almost Every Family"***. This workshop, hosted by MEP Marisa Matias and ECPC, gathered speakers of the Commission, the European Parliament, research organisations and patients. In addition, a "Written Declaration on Cancer Research" was launched in the European Parliament on the same day.

In her opening speech, **MEP Marisa Matias** said that "the majority of cancers are unfortunately still untreatable. EU citizens should have equal rights in terms of treatment and access to research. The need for cancer research cannot be discussed without the involvement of patients". She thanked ECPC for taking the initiative with FACE. The Chairman of the ENVI Committee, **MEP Jo Leinen**, also welcomed the FACE initiative in the Parliament as the citizens' chamber. With the European Parliament Resolution on Cancer in 2008, he referred to the Parliament's commitment on cancer which culminated into the set-up of the European Partnership for Action Against Cancer. The Chairman of ITRE Committee, **MEP Herbert Reul**, welcomed the FACE workshop as necessary and good: "There are so many events here in the Parliament, but sometimes there are events that are much more important – like this one". **MEP Antonia Parvanova** stated the MEPs commitment and willingness to work together and to push the Commission and Council. **MEP Michèle Rivasi** addressed the need for research on preventive measures, stating the example of lack of research on the risks of nanotechnology. **MEP António Fernando Correia de Campos** called for an improvement of screening programmes and added that patient groups need to be empowered to increase patient participation in these programmes. **MEP Alojz Peterle** highlighted the need for inclusive action in the fight against cancer and that MEPs can act as "stimulators,

emulators and fighters against cancer". He wished FACE success and highlighted the need of MEPs to cooperate with NGOs.

Prof. Gordon McVie, European Institute of Oncology, outlined that in order to create progress in cancer research, "coordinated 'network signalling' of multidisciplinary teams including researchers, public health experts, patients, sociologists, psychologists, economists, lawyers and industry must take place. The EU should fund the networking". He called for more risk taking in cancer research. **Prof. Per-Anders Abrahamsson**, Secretary General of the European Association of Urology, addressed the need to put basic research into clinical practice and shared an outlook on the upcoming "genomic era" of more tailored therapies.

David Harmon, Member of the Cabinet of the Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, said that "cancer is everybody's problem", and added that regulatory barriers need to be removed to give the EU leadership in cancer research. He also added that counselling of patients must be taken into account in EU policy. **Jan-Willem van de Loo** from the Directorate General of Research highlighted the investment of the Commission in cancer research within the 6th and 7th Framework Programme, and highlighted key initiatives of the Commission to coordinate cancer research in Europe. **Stefan Führung** from the Directorate General for Health and Consumers outlined how EU Policy can affect inequalities. He explained the impact of the EU Clinical Trials Directive and the Commission's current action to improve it. **Joana Namorado** from DG Research highlighted the challenges of Ethics in Clinical Trials and the need for balance of interests between patients, researchers and industry.

Tom Hudson, President of ECPC, said that "The Forum Against Cancer Europe is the grassroots policy movement initiated by patients that wish to achieve a patient-centered approach in EU Policy". He added that "we all need to show our faces to tackle cancer. Cancer patients need cancer research, and cancer research needs cancer patients". Testimonies of three cancer patients followed, highlighting their challenges in cross border healthcare to access clinical trials, their campaigns to improve access to therapies, and their urgent need for progress in research.

The new FACE website at <http://www.forumagainstcancer.eu> will support the activities of the initiative as well as future workshops of the Forum. Rather than being a one-way communication medium, it will develop tools to foster the dialogue, providing information about supporters and focus topics, and interfaces to up to date communication in Social Media channels.

With the launch of the FACE, the European Cancer Patient Coalition is confident to continue the important collaboration with MEPs, the European Parliament, the EU Commission and other stakeholders to improve the situation for all cancer patients across Europe.

Please join FACE in the fight against cancer!

About ECPC

Established in 2003, The European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC) is the **voice** of the European cancer patient community, **uniquely** representing the interests of all cancer patient groups from the major to the rarer cancers. It has been established **to represent the views of cancer patients** in the European healthcare debate and to provide a forum for European cancer patients to exchange information and share best practice experiences. ECPC represents over 300 patients' organizations across Europe. **ECPC is run and governed by patients**. It is registered as a non-profit association in the Netherlands. During the last legislative period, ECPC has already provided the MEPs with a platform to discuss issues of relevance and to communicate to their constituents. ECPC receives funding in the forms of EU grants, donations and unrestricted corporate grants, following strict transparency policies.

Find more information on ECPC at <http://www.ecpc-online.org> and the *Forum Against Cancer Europe (FACE)* at <http://www.forumagainstcancer.eu>

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