

## NATIONAL CANCER HUB

### PORTUGAL

## Introduction

Cancer is one of the five major societal challenges the European Commission (EC) identified. In 2020, 2.7 million people in the European Union were diagnosed with the disease, and another 1.3 million people lost their lives to it<sup>1</sup>.

Currently, Europe accounts for a tenth of the world's population, but a quarter of the world's cancer cases. Unless we take decisive action, lives lost to cancer in the EU are set to increase by more than 24% by 2035<sup>2</sup>, as a result from ageing populations, unhealthy lifestyles, unfavourable health determinants, and environmental and working conditions, making it the leading cause of death in the EU. Across Europe, the possibility of receiving a timely cancer diagnosis and of surviving the disease differs considerably because of inequalities in preventive policies, access to state-of-the-art diagnostics and treatments, and experienced care.

Cancer puts immense pressure on European health systems. In 2018, the total cost of cancer in Europe was estimated at €199 billion<sup>3</sup> (EU-27 plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). These costs are expected to increase further due to the growing incidence of cancer and as more people live longer with their disease following the recent introduction of personalized treatment and care interventions.

**Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**<sup>4</sup> is the EU's response to these needs. It reflects a **political commitment to leave no stone unturned to take action against cancer**. The EBCP is a policy-driven initiative that sets out actions to support, coordinate or supplement Member States' efforts at every stage of the disease: from prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, to an improved quality of life for cancer patients and survivors. The EBCP launched in 2021 will be implemented using the whole range of Commission funding instruments such as Cancer Mission, EU4Health and Digital Europe Programme, with a total of €4 billion being earmarked for actions addressing cancer.

Together with EBCP, the Cancer Mission will assign Research and Innovation a central role in the development of new Health Policies. Cancer Mission as set an **ambitious goal of improving the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030, through prevention, cure and for those affected by cancer including their families, to live longer and better**. *Mission Cancer will contribute with 2 Billion Euros for the EBCP.*

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<sup>1</sup> Estimativas do European Cancer Information System (ECIS)

<sup>2</sup> <https://gco.iarc.fr/tomorrow/en/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ejcancer.com/article/S0959-8049\(20\)30026-5/fulltext](https://www.ejcancer.com/article/S0959-8049(20)30026-5/fulltext)

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/health/system/files/2021-02/eu\\_cancer-plan\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/system/files/2021-02/eu_cancer-plan_en_0.pdf)

The implementation of the Cancer Plan will be monitored, by the European Commission, through an implementation roadmap and progress indicators. The roadmap and indicators will reflect the actions included in the Cancer Plan and will undergo regular review by the Implementation Group.

Given the current breadth of EU calls in the cancer field, there is a need for a coordinated response at national level bringing the relevant stakeholders to work together and share experiences. Efficient implementation of the EBCP aims to bring large benefits to Portuguese health care system, science and technology system and citizens. This structure is the **National Cancer Hub**.

## EBCP Implementation in Portugal

### Governance

The Portuguese **National Cancer Hub** will be coordinated by the Health General Directorate (DGS), through the National Program for Oncological Diseases (PNDO), and by the Agency for Clinical Research and Biomedical Innovation (AICIB), with the aim to **coordinate, promote and support the implementation of European cancer initiatives in Portugal, and to define action and funding strategies aligned with the National Cancer Control Strategy 2021-2030**.

The Portuguese *National Cancer Hub* will have its activities grounded in two major groups, the *Stakeholders Group* and the *Policy Group* (Fig.1), which coordinated actions will enable the generation of value for both citizens and the national health system.

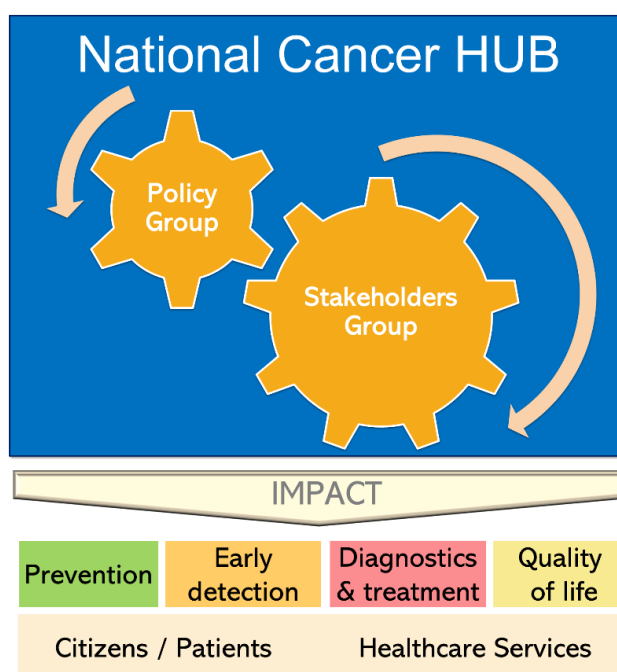


Fig.1 – Portuguese National Cancer Hub overview, governance structure and impact

## *Stakeholders Group*

The Stakeholders Group will be composed of representatives of national, public and private organizations, including health institutions, academia, research institutes, scientific societies, professional bodies, patient associations, industry, civilian organizations, among others, with vested interest in cancer-related topics. Participation in the Stakeholders Group will be open to the community through the opening of a call for expressions of interests.

Activities of the *Stakeholders Group* include:

- Scouting for funding opportunities related with cancer in different programmes, such as Mission Cancer, EU4Health Program, Digital Europe Program and national research and innovation programmes, among others;
- Participation in Thematic Working Groups, aligned with the National Plan to Fight Cancer 2021-2030:
  - Prevention
  - Early detection
  - Diagnosis and treatment
  - Survivors
  - Cross-cutting areas (Paediatric Cancer, Health Information, Research and Development...)
- Identification of national priorities in different thematic areas;
- Foster the participation of Portuguese organizations in European call for proposals related with Cancer.

## *Policy Group*

To guarantee the success of the EBCP, it is essential that each Member State adopts a political and financial commitment with the plan and its objectives, including the mobilization of national resources and the implementation of effective health and research strategies and funding policies. Therefore, the Policy Group – established by Ministerial order 11429/2021, of 19 November 2021 – of the National Cancer Hub is composed of representatives of national authorities involved in defining Health strategies and funding policies.

Activities of the *Policy Group*, aligned with the **National Cancer Control Strategy 2021-2030**, are defined as:

- Encourage the uptake of new solutions, technologies and scientific evidences in health systems and national policies;
- Define strategy and funding actions for national priorities defined according to the EBCP;
- Participate in European actions aimed at national authorities.

## Expected Outcomes

- Ensure the alignment of national cancer strategy with the EBCP;
- Maximize the participation of Portuguese organizations in European actions in the cancer area;
- Strengthen collaborations of Portuguese health organizations and authorities with partner national and international organizations;
- Incorporate research findings, innovations and scientific evidence into national health systems and policies;
- Effectively improve healthcare, quality of life and fair treatment for cancer patients and citizens.