

## POLICY PRIORITIES & UPDATES

European 2019 Manifesto for the paediatric oncology and haematology community: "Beating childhood cancer: Cure more and cure better – Towards zero deaths & zero late effects"



### ONCOPOLICY

#### International Childhood Cancer Awareness Day (ICCD 2020): 'Artificial Intelligence and Big Data – Towards the next frontier in paediatric cancer research & innovation in Europe'

On 18 February 2020, the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Childhood Cancer Awareness Day (ICCD 2020) took place at the European Parliament, hosted by MEP Patrizia Toia (IT, S&D) in collaboration between SIOPE Europe ([www.siope.eu](http://www.siope.eu)), CCI-Europe ([www.ccieurope.eu](http://www.ccieurope.eu)) and PanCare ([www.pancare.eu](http://www.pancare.eu)), to explore the urgent need for life-saving innovation across the paediatric cancer pathway by means of AI and big data.

The ICCD 2020 made a powerful point that Europe's youngest citizens affected by cancer – our children, our future – are not left behind and on the contrary can make their voices be heard, fully partake, and benefit from these novel technological and policy initiatives. The messages from healthcare professionals and parents were loud and clear:

- Artificial Intelligence can be a powerful game changer to gain new insights in paediatric cancer genesis, allowing better treatments and better cures.
- One example pioneering AI in this field is the EU Primage Project ([www.primageproject.eu](http://www.primageproject.eu)) under the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.
- Big data should be findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable if it is to benefit progress in childhood cancers.

Full details are available in the press release [here](#).

The European paediatric cancer community looks forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure that novel technologies can be fully applied for the benefit of children and adolescents with cancer, survivors, and their families.

## Special Policy Event: 28 January

A special lunch meeting with the European childhood cancer community and newly elected Members of the European Parliament “Beating Childhood Cancer in Europe: the 2020-2024 agenda” was held on 28 January at the European Parliament in Brussels.

This Special Policy Event aimed to gather perspectives from policy makers, paediatric cancer professionals, parents and patients, and foster exchange on the actions that the European Parliament can take to advance more and better cures for childhood cancer patients, survivors and their families across Europe. Based on the latest evidence and most urgent needs that remain across Europe today, the discussion focused (but not limited) to the following:

- The paediatric cancer research agenda including the prospect of more comprehensive paediatric cancer research funding streams in the EU budget (EU childhood cancer ‘mission’)
- Equal access to essential medicines and affordable innovation for young cancer patients across Europe
- Overcoming inequalities in childhood cancer survival across Europe, including in relation to the cross-border healthcare directive and the European Reference Networks
- Long-term care and socio-economic participation of childhood cancer survivors, including equal access to financial services and organised follow up in all European settings

SIOP Europe and CCI Europe were delighted to count on the presence of 16 MEPs including leaders of the dedicated interest group on cancer MEP Véronique Trillet-Lenoir and MEP Loucas Foulas, who co-hosted the event. It was an important opportunity to consolidate the political will to tackle childhood cancers further in the EU policy cycle 2019-2024.

## Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan launched by the European Commission

In an unprecedented high-level EU commitment to countering cancer, the European Commission launched **Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan** on 4 February (World Cancer Day) at a plenary event in the European Parliament in Brussels. The event was widely attended by cancer stakeholders including a delegation from SIOP Europe and CCI Europe representing paediatric cancers. The occasion showed EU’s strong dedication to fighting cancer and use the collective power for positive change.

The new European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has placed cancer high on the EU agenda calling for ‘Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan’ to support Member States improve cancer prevention and care, with ‘a close link with the research mission on cancer in the future Horizon Europe programme.’ Childhood cancer became a solemn spotlight as President von der Leyen revealed that her little sister died of childhood cancer.

The [new Head of the Commission DG for Health and Food Safety \(DG SANTE\), Commissioner Stella Kyriakides](#), is leading on the further elaboration of the EU Cancer Plan. A Cyprus national, Ms Kyriakides is a cancer survivor and has been a proactive patient advocate in her previous roles.

The European Commission has released public consultations seeking for input from stakeholders. The EU Cancer Plan is indeed the first step in turning our ambitious vision into tangible action and make a difference together. [Read the full mission letter here](#) and the web stream link is [available here](#).

SIOPE Europe has responded to the first consultation with an urgent call for dedicated streams on childhood cancer referring to the 'WHO Global Initiative on Childhood Cancer' as an inspirational initiative.



### **SIOPE Board Member Professor Gilles Vassal and EPP Chairman Manfred Weber Meeting**

Marking International Childhood Cancer Awareness Day (ICCD2020), a **special policy meeting** took place on 4 February between SIOPE Board Member Gilles Vassal and the Chairman of the European Parliament European People's Party (EPP) Group Chairman Manfred Weber to send a message of urgency for [#BeatingChildhoodCancer](#). EPP is currently the largest group in the European Parliament and Manfred Weber as its leader has a strong commitment to activities in the field of cancer to make a difference for all EU citizens.

The message stated the fact that 10 children under 15 years of age die of cancer every day in Europe and as such, we need specific measures for children and adolescents. If we strive to combine our resources and research capacity in Europe to bring forward a European Masterplan, the successful fight against cancer is achievable.

There's a need to access all the treatment that can cure children, and therefore tackling inequalities is a very important goal. "We therefore need to join forces to treat paediatric cancer. Children are the future and we want to see them grow up."

Watch the video: <https://instagram.com/p/B8lrfmYJnKi/>

This video was released on 15 February, International Childhood Cancer Day. The support of the EPP Chairman has been invaluable in raising further awareness amongst European policy makers of childhood cancer needs and priorities.



## ENVI Committee Meeting: 18 February

ENVI Committee, the largest committee in the European Parliament, works towards generating the legislative framework to achieve carbon neutrality in Europe by 2050 as well as work in other policy priorities such as public health, food safety, biodiversity, circular economy, etc.

The Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (**ENVI Committee**) Health Working Group held a meeting on 18 February in Brussels to discuss **‘Cancer prevention – modifiable risks’**. The meeting was co-chaired by MEP Sara Cerdas and MEP Dolores Montserrat.

SIOP Europe President Professor Pamela Kearns spoke at this event and presented the challenge of understanding modifiable risk factors in paediatric oncology and the potential role EU initiatives in addressing this.

Pam Kearns explained that: “Although lifestyle changes are identified that can help to reduce the risk of adults developing cancer, there are currently no known alterable risk factors to prevent most childhood cancers. High dose ionizing radiation and prior chemotherapy are accepted causes of childhood cancers. Since no other environmental (exposures originating outside the body) risk factors have emerged as definitive causes for childhood cancers, genetic predisposition is the major known cause of childhood cancer. There is therefore critical need for more research on predisposition and oncogenic drivers.”

The key message highlighted was the need to understand the causes of paediatric cancers and address prevention where possible. This is in fact part of the 7 scientific and clinical objectives within the SIOPE Strategic Plan. To address this need, the SIOP Europe Host Genome Working Group was launched in May 2019.

It was an important opportunity to raise awareness amongst MEPs in the Health Committee of the specific policy and funding needs in the paediatric cancer sector where prevention is concerned.



## EDUCATION

### **NEW: SIOP Europe Course in Paediatric Oncology**

The first module of the **SIOP Europe Course in Paediatric Oncology** will take place 24-28 March 2021 in Maasmechelen, Belgium.

The SIOP Europe Course in Paediatric Oncology is a new SIOP Europe-led initiative aimed at addressing the lack of European-wide educational programs in paediatric haematology and oncology. The Course aims to support young and promising paediatric oncologists in the development of their careers in paediatric haematology and oncology.

This Course is a unique 3-year long educational and mentoring program for fellows in paediatric haematology and oncology, and junior faculty at academic medical centres across Europe. It will take place annually and will consist of 3 modules, each lasting 4 days. Participants will attend one module per year and will receive CME accreditation per module and a SIOP Europe Certificate after having completed all modules.

More information [here](#).

### **ESO – SIOPE E-Learning in Paediatric Oncology**

SIOPE has teamed up with ESO to expand the available paediatric oncology content available via e-learning modules.

These modules have been scheduled: NHL in childhood and adolescence; Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis (HLH); Histiocytic disorders in childhood; Renal tumours of childhood; Hodgkin's disease in childhood and adolescence; Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in childhood and adolescence; Osteosarcoma.

Further information available [here](#).

### **ESO – SIOPE Masterclass in Paediatric Oncology**

The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the **ESO – SIOPE Europe Masterclass in Paediatric Oncology** has been postponed and will now take place on 28 November - 3 December 2020 in Bucharest, Romania.

This CME accredited clinically oriented educational program has been designed for advanced paediatric oncologists, who wish to improve their skills in clinical management of common childhood tumours and leukaemia and lymphoma. It is designed to offer a unique learning experience, providing practice-oriented training and the teaching sessions will focus on the application of the most recent research findings to clinical practice.

Further information [here](#).

---

## NEW WEBSITE

### SIOP Europe launched the new website on International Childhood Cancer Day (15 February)

Aiming to serve our entire community, the new website will make all SIOPE's resources available for various stakeholders (medical professionals, advocates, policymakers, parents/patients/survivors, etc.).

[www.siope.eu](http://www.siope.eu)

---

## PAST EVENT



The **8<sup>th</sup> ACCELERATE Paediatric Oncology Conference** was successfully held on 6-7 February in Brussels, Belgium.

The Conference enabled presentations from a spectrum of international experts on clinical and preclinical paediatric oncology research, regulatory challenges worldwide, patient / parent advocate activities and priorities. Discussion opportunities were facilitated, participants could contribute to developing annual Work Programmes and hear reports of ACCELERATE's achievements.

Website: [www.accelerate-platform.org](http://www.accelerate-platform.org) | Twitter: [#ACCELERATEplatform](https://twitter.com/ACCELERATEplatform) | Photos: [view here](#)

---

## UPCOMING EVENT



SIOP Europe, alongside CCI Europe, has made the difficult decision to postpone the **2<sup>nd</sup> SIOP Europe Annual Meeting** in Valencia (4-8 May 2020) due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The new dates will be confirmed as soon as possible.

This is a very challenging situation but the health and safety of everyone is our highest priority. Our thoughts and sympathies are with all those affected by COVID-19, their families and the professionals involved in their care.

More information: [www.siopeurope.eu](http://www.siopeurope.eu) | Twitter: [#SIOPEurope20](https://twitter.com/SIOPEurope20)

**SIOP Europe:** [www.siope.eu](http://www.siope.eu)