Oncology in the EU and globally: The role of ESMO at a glance
ESMO’S KEY VISION FOR THE 2019 - 2024 EU MANDATE

Creating European policies that make the most of Europe’s unique ability to tackle cross-border healthcare challenges

Fostering a European Union that supports Member States to deliver the best possible cancer care

Facilitating equal access to optimal cancer care to all patients and continuing to tackle cancer’s evolving challenges

OUR PRIORITIES

1. ONE ONCOLOGY COMMUNITY
Cancer professionals grow together in a community that fosters inclusion across disciplines and geographical borders to cater to their diverse needs.

2. EDUCATION FOR LIFE
Oncologists everywhere are supported in their development through continuous education that helps them keep up with standards of cancer care and advances in the field.

3. ACCESSIBLE CANCER CARE:
People around the world benefit equally from reliable cancer care built on a concerted global effort to create sustainable models of prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR MEDICAL ONCOLOGY
ESMO is the leading professional organisation for medical oncology. Comprising over 25,000 oncology professionals from over 160 countries, ESMO is the society of reference for oncology education and information at European and global levels.

ESMO MISSION

- Improve the quality of prevention, diagnosis, treatment, supportive and palliative care, as well as the follow-up of patients with malignant diseases
- Advance the art, science, recognition, and practice of oncology
- Disseminate knowledge to cancer patients and the public
- Educate and train people involved in clinical cancer care and research
- Ensure a high standard of qualification of medical oncologists within the multidisciplinary team
- Promote equal access to optimal cancer care for all cancer patients
KEY ESMO INITIATIVES IN PUBLIC POLICY

MEDICINES SHORTAGES
- Shortages of inexpensive essential medicines are a growing public health emergency that requires a concerted and collaborative action at EU level.
- Given that cancer is highly affected by shortages of these inexpensive medicines, ESMO decided to prioritise the issue and published a report on Cancer Medicines Shortages as well as 5 Country profiles on Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, Belgium and Finland, in collaboration with the Economist Intelligence Unit.
- In April 2019, ESMO launched a Call to Action, supported by 20 MEPs and 16 stakeholders, calling for political commitments to tackle ineffective essential medicines shortages at EU level.
- ESMO highlighted the need to address shortages in its response to consultations on the EU Pharmaceutical Strategy.
- For more information: www.esmo.org/Policy/Inexpensive-Essential-Cancer-Medicines-Shortages

RARE CANCERS
- With 24% of all new cancer diagnoses being rare, ESMO established Rare Cancers Europe (RCE), a multistakeholder partnership to advocate for better policies on rare cancers, in 2008.
- A 39 partner-strong multistakeholder partnership bringing together scientific societies, patient and research organisations, healthcare and education providers, and the industry.
- RCE works to overcome the unique challenges faced by the rare cancer community, to place the issue of rare cancers firmly on the European policy agenda, to identify and promote appropriate solutions and to exchange best practices.
- RCE will work towards the implementation of the Rare Cancer Agenda 2030: Ten Recommendations from the EU Joint Action on Rare Cancers.
- For more information: www.rarecancerseurope.org/

BIOSIMILARS
- Biosimilars are medicinal products containing a similar version of the active substance of their biological originator or reference product and are derived from living organisms.
- With many expensive cancer medicines coming off patent, ESMO believes that biosimilars present a necessary and timely opportunity as they can positively impact the financial sustainability of healthcare systems while improving access to medicines for patients. This view has been laid down in ESMO’s Position Paper on Biosimilars.
- In order to raise awareness about biosimilars and build confidence among the community, ESMO launched a Biosimilars Portal, containing information on the science, regulation, education and resources for patients (including an infographic) on biosimilars.
- For more information: www.esmo.org/Position/policy/biosimilarsportal

PRECISION MEDICINE
- Precision medicine is an integral part of cancer care.
- To contribute to its development, ESMO created the ESPAC-6 Scale for Clinical Actionability of Molecular Targets (ESCAT).
- ESCAT aims to optimise patient care by making it easier to identify patients with cancer who are likely to respond to precision medicines, and help make treatment more cost-effective.
- For more information: www.esmo.org/policy/ESMO-scale-for-clinical-actionability-of-molecular-targets-escat

EDUCATION
- Specialised education is one of ESMO’s priorities. With the aim of supporting oncologists in a fast-changing professional environment, ESMO organises world-leading oncology conferences, where the best and most relevant research is presented.
- Within Europe and globally, ESMO provides tailored educational programmes for all, ranging from medical student courses to advanced courses for specialised oncologists and specific regional programmes.
- For more information: www.esmo.org/meetings

PATIENT SUPPORT
- Patients are the driving force and inspiration behind all ESMO’s activities.
- ESMO created the ESMO Patient Advocates Working Group (PAWG) to ensure that the voice of cancer patients is appropriately incorporated into ESMO’s activities. The working group serves as a platform and connector to the wider Cancer Patient Advocacy community.
- Each year ESMO, together with the PAWG, organises the ESMO Patient Advocacy Track: a full educational track that addresses topics which are particularly relevant to the Cancer Advocacy Community.
- ESMO also publishes the ESMO Patient Guides which are specifically designed to assist patients to better understand the nature of different types of cancer and evaluate the best available treatment choices.
- For more information: www.esmo.org/for-patients

HIGH QUALITY MEDICINES
- ESMO created the ESMO-Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale (ESMO-MCBS).
- This is a tool that helps to assess the value of cancer care, prioritise medicines and also address the challenges of the appropriate use of limited resources to deliver cost-effective and affordable cancer care.
- This tool is being used by various countries across the world, to assess new cancer medicines.
- ESMO is working towards the development of a geographically-adapted value-based reimbursement model.
- For more information: www.esmo.org/Policy/ESMO-MCBS
- For more information: https://www.esmo.org/policy/accessibility-and-availability-of-medicines

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION
- Data protection regulations must support patient privacy, while also allowing medical advancements through retrospective research.
- ESMO stresses the need for harmonisation across countries and is committed to helping EU institutions and individual Member States protect the future of health research.
- ESMO contributed throughout the adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), advocating for the inclusion of a withdrawable ‘one-time consent’ from patients, subject to strict safeguards, allowing their data and tissues to be used for future retrospective clinical research.
- For more information: www.esmo.org/Policy/Political-Initiatives/EU-General-Data-Protection-Regulation

CLINICAL GUIDELINES
- Clinical practice guidelines are crucial for oncologists to deliver the highest standard of care to their patients.
- The ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines are intended to provide oncology professionals with a set of recommendations for the best standards of cancer care, based on the findings of evidence-based medicine.
- ESMO prepares robust guidelines including information on the incidence of the malignancy, diagnostic criteria, staging of disease and risk assessment, treatment plans and follow-up designed to help oncologists deliver an appropriate quality of care to their patients.
- For more information: www.esmo.org/Guidelines

CLINICAL TRIALS
- Robust clinical trial frameworks are fundamental for developing new, effective and sustainable treatments for all diseases.
- The Clinical Trials Regulation (CTR) is an important legislation that paves the way for creating a suitable environment to facilitate effective clinical cancer research in Europe.
- ESMO, along with the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer and the European Association of Cancer Research, has created a forum to discuss the implementation of the CTR and its effect on academic clinical studies (non-commercial research): Clinical Academic Cancer Research Forum (CAREFOR).
- For more information: www.esmo.org/Policy/Political-Initiatives/Clinical-Trials-Regulation

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On 8 January 2021, ESMO launched a Call to Action to underscore the importance of vaccinating early all patients with cancer, especially those on active anticancer treatment. Supported by over 50 organisations, the Call reflects the oncology community’s unified voice towards early vaccinations.

**ESMO CALL TO ACTION ON COVID-19 VACCINATIONS AND PATIENTS WITH CANCER: VACCINATE. MONITOR. EDUCATE.**

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**THE ESMO CALL TO ACTION REQUESTS MEMBER STATES TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:**

1. **VACCINATE ALL CANCER PATIENTS** in line with the WHO principles and objectives aiming to reduce deaths and disease burden. Patients with active disease or receiving anticancer treatment deserve an additional priority in case of limitations only.

2. **DILIGENTLY COLLECT DATA** via suitable studies and registries to monitor the effects of vaccines in the vulnerable population, including patients with cancer and their immune response.

3. **EDUCATE AND INSTIL CONFIDENCE** among the public and patients in receiving the vaccines and provide them with up-to-date information in lay language.

To date, the Call to Action has been endorsed by 53 organisations, including healthcare professional and patient organisations, and it has been instrumental in shaping national vaccination strategies, thus benefitting patients with cancer.

ESMO CONTRIBUTED TO THE MOST RECENT KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CANCER COMMUNITY

ESMO collaborates on a regular basis with key bodies and stakeholders such as the European Medicines Agency (EMA), European Network for Health Technology Assessment (EUnetHTA) and World Health Organization (WHO) to advance cancer research and ensure appropriate access to cancer treatment.

A FEW RELEVANT HEALTH INITIATIVES FOR THE 2019-2024 EU MANDATE

ESMO Call to Action on COVID-19 Vaccinations and Patients with Cancer
ESMO initiative to ensure that the needs of patients with cancer are taken into account as part of COVID-19 vaccination strategies.

Launch of Horizon 2020
ESMO advocated for the needs of clinical researchers to continue the use of data from clinical trials to ensure the progress of medical research.

2014
Launch of Joint Action on Rare Cancers (JARC)
ESMO and Rare Cancers Europe’s efforts for the recognition of rare cancers have been instrumental for the creation of the JARC.

2016
Launch of the first European Reference Networks (ERNs)
ESMO and Rare Cancers Europe have led an initiative to increase awareness about rare cancers within the framework of the ERNs. ESMO is an Associated Partner of the ERN for Rare Adult Solid Cancers (EURACAN).

2017
Entry into force of the General data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
ESMO worked hard to protect the needs of health research. ESMO advocated for 1) the inclusion of a withdrawable “one-time consent” from patients allowing their data and tissue to be used for future retrospective research, 2) the inclusion of “no-consent” to allow research on population -based disease registries in line with strict ethical standards.

2018
ESMO Call to Action on COVID-19 Vaccinations and Patients with Cancer
ESMO initiative to ensure that the needs of patients with cancer are taken into account as part of COVID-19 vaccination strategies.

2019
European Parliament report on the implementation of the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive
ESMO collaborated with MEPs to ensure that the challenges related to medicines shortages and the prevention, detection and management of rare cancers were considered in the report.

2020-21
Applicability of the Clinical Trials Regulation (CTR)
ESMO advocated for the needs of clinical researchers, including but not limited to, continued use of data from clinical trials to ensure the progress of medical research through the one-time consent principle. *The CTR will become applicable 6 months after the Clinical Trials Information System is functional.

2021
Proposal for Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Regulation
Unifying HTA across Europe requires a common approach on the clinical effectiveness of medicines. Amongst many other initiatives, ESMO has developed the ESMO-Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale (ESMO-MCBS) that prioritises medicines, to deliver cost-effective and affordable cancer care.

Horizon Europe & European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases
The allocation of funds to areas of key unmet need will be a defining moment in the EU’s research legacy. The research efforts must be done in collaboration with stakeholders across the healthcare spectrum to improve the lives of rare disease patients.

Cancer Mission under Horizon Europe
Under the Horizon Europe framework, a specific cancer mission will set common goals to improve cancer prevention, early diagnosis and quality of life during and after treatment.

Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan
The launch of Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan in 2021 will support EU Member States in tackling the entire disease pathway, from prevention and early detection to treatment and quality of life of cancer patients and survivors.

European medicines agencies network strategy to 2025
The European medicines agencies network strategy to 2025 sets the goals and challenges of the EMA and HMA (Heads of Medicines Agencies). From improving access to medicines to overcoming supply chain challenges, this is a crucial document for all stakeholders in healthcare, including the oncology community.

Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe
The Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe aims to provide people across the EU with equal access to safe, state-of-the-art and affordable therapies through the creation of a system promoting patient access to medicines and innovation in areas of unmet need.
ESMO CONTRIBUTED TO KEY GLOBAL RESOLUTIONS, STRATEGIES, AND REPORTS RELATED TO CANCER

Since receiving “official relations status” with WHO in 2013, ESMO collaborates on WHO projects to facilitate implementation of the WHO Cancer Resolution to reduce the burden of cancer worldwide. Ongoing projects include scaling up national cancer control plans, optimising the cancer workforce, increasing access to cancer medicines, improving patient outcomes, promoting cancer prevention and healthy lifestyles, and raising awareness of WHO norms and guidance to ESMO members and partners worldwide. Through ESMO’s “special consultative status” with the United Nation’s Economic and Social Council, ESMO participates in the work and meetings of the United Nations.

WHO Official Relations Status
ESMO has “official relations status” with WHO, a privilege that the WHO Executive Board grants to organisations that continually support the WHO and its mission.

WHO Cancer Resolution
ESMO strongly supported the Cancer Resolution and its recommended actions to reduce cancer deaths by 25% by 2025 and 33% by 2030, as well as work towards universal health coverage by 2030.

WHO Technical Report
The WHO Report references the ESMO-MCBS as a tool to facilitate the benefit assessment process of cancer medicines to be considered for the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines. It cites ESMO surveys as representing “the most comprehensive assessment on the availability of cancer medicines globally.”

WHO Model List of Essential Medicines
ESMO successfully recommended cancer medicines and biosimilars which were added to the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

UN Political Declaration on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs)
ESMO’s public statement to the UN supported the successful inclusion in the UN Political Declaration on NCDs of government actions necessary to reduce the burden of cancer.

UN Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage (UHC)
ESMO called on governments to guarantee that UHC benefits include a core set of comprehensive services for the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and palliative care of cancer, delivered by an adequate and well-trained workforce.

UN Political Declaration on Palliative Care
ESMO advocated to ensure the provision of evidence-based, cost-effective, and equitable palliative care services, including medicines for legitimate medical use to relieve unnecessary suffering worldwide.

WHO COVID-19 Response Resolution
ESMO urged governments to secure the availability of essential cancer medicines. ESMO successfully recommended cancer medicines and biosimilars which were added to the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines.

WHO Roadmap for Access to Medicines, Vaccines and other Health Products, 2018-2023
ESMO requested governments to ensure access to essential medicines for primary and secondary levels of health care where cancer patients are treated, and for palliative care services to be available to everyone who needs them.

WHO Resolution on Protecting, Safeguarding and Investing in the Health and Care Workforce
ESMO called on governments to protect and invest in the health workforce and supported WHO’s 2021 International Year of Health and Care Workers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.esmo.org/policy/world-health-organization-united-nations
GET IN TOUCH WITH US

Who Are We?
Founded in 1975, ESMO is the leading professional organisation for medical oncology. Comprising over 25,000 oncology professionals from over 160 countries, we are the society of reference for oncology education and information at European and global levels.

Questions?
Please feel free to get in touch should you have any questions concerning ESMO, oncology in the European Union or any of the files mentioned in this brochure.

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