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

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 medicines, ESMO decided to prioritise the issue and published a report on Cancer Medicines Shortages as well as a Cross-Country Profile 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 expensive essential medicines shortages at EU level.
- ESMO highlighted the need to address shortages in its responses to consultations on the EU Pharmaceutical Strategy and the revision of the EU general pharmaceuticals legislation.

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 standard of care to their patients.

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).

RARE CANCERS
- With 24% of all new cancer diagnoses being rare, ESMO established Rare Cancers Europe (RCE) in 2008, now a 38-strong multistakeholder partnership of 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.
- RCE’s Call to Action on Rare Cancers in All Policies, links rare cancers to Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan and other policy initiatives. It is currently endorsed by 38 organisations, the 4 European Reference Networks on rare cancers, and several Members of the European Parliament.

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.

PRECISION MEDICINE
- Precision medicine is an integral part of cancer care.
- To contribute to its development, ESMO created the ESMO 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.

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.

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 patient 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.

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 and prioritises 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.

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 the 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.

SHORTAGES OF INEXPENSIVE ESSENTIAL MEDICINES
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KEY ESMO INITIATIVES IN PUBLIC POLICY - CONTINUED

PUBLIC POLICY WEBINARS
The ESMO Public Policy Webinars were launched in 2021 and provide timely information on important topics in European and global public health policy that impact the oncology community.

Click here for more information.

CANCER PREVENTION INITIATIVES
Cancer prevention is the most cost-effective long-term strategy to reduce the cancer burden. ESMO resources and collaborative initiatives with other organisations include:

- ESMO Cancer Prevention Portal with resources on science, education, policy and regulation, and patient information.
  
  Click here for more information.

- ESMO is supporting the International Agency for Research on Cancer in its development of the IARC World Cancer Report Updates Learning Platform.
  
  Click here for more information.

- ESMO supports and promotes WHO’s annual World No Tobacco Day.

- ESMO is partnering with the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS) on their Cancer Prevention Across Europe campaign (PrEve-can). The campaign promotes the 12 recommendations of the ‘European Code Against Cancer’, developed by IARC.

DECIDE - HEALTH DECISION HUB
Decide – Health Decision Hub is hosted by the World Health Organization. It is the global health network that supports evidence-based decision making in health to secure value for money across health systems through collaborative ventures.

ESMO is a member of the Decide Steering Group, which also includes the World Health Organization, the European Healthcare and Hospital Federation (HOPE), the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), the International Network of HTA Agencies (INAHTA), Centre for Health Ethics Law and Development (CELD), and Africa Centre for Evidence - University of Johannesburg, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

Click here for more information.

ESMO STUDY ON THE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF ANTINEOPLASTIC MEDICINES 2.0
- ESMO’s Antineoplastic Medicines Study (ANMS) is an international collaborative project cited by the World Health Organization as the most comprehensive assessment on the availability of cancer medicines globally.
- The ESMO study shows that internationally there is a growing disparity between licensed anti-cancer medicines and those that are actually available, leading to shortages of medically necessary cancer medicines that oncologists need to treat their patients according to the evidence-based ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines.
- Version 2.0 of the study was expanded to gather data on the impact of COVID-19 and cancer medicine shortages, drawing upon, among others, the recommendations in the 2017 Economist Intelligence Unit report on medicines shortages produced in collaboration with ESMO.

Click here for more information.

ESMO STUDY ON THE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF BIOMOLECULAR TECHNOLOGIES IN ONCOLOGY IN EUROPE
- The ESMO Study on Availability and Accessibility to Biomolecular Technologies in Oncology in Europe seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of availability of biomolecular technologies to patients, the status of their use and prescription, barriers to access, and potential economic issues related to cost and reimbursement, because challenges to access to biomedical technologies limit patient access to targeted medicines.
- The study is a European collaborative project to gather data to facilitate a dialogue with health authorities for increased access and availability to biomolecular technologies for cancer patients.
- The survey questions draw upon, among others, the “Recommendations for the use of next-generation sequencing (NGS) for patients with metastatic cancers: a report from the ESMO Precision Medicine Working Group” published in 2020.

Click here for more information.
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.

**EU initiatives & programmes**
- EU legislative & regulatory framework
- ESMO initiative

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Adoption of the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Regulation**
ESMO advocated for using cancer medicines as a pilot for joint clinical assessments under the HTA Regulation.

**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.

**Report of the European Parliament’s Special Committee on Beating Cancer (Beca)**
ESMO actively engaged with MEPs to ensure that the needs of the oncology community were taken into account in the BECA report on “Strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer” adopted in February 2022.

**Entry into application of the Clinical Trials Regulation (CTR)**
January 2022 marked the start of the application of the CTR and the official go-live of the Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS). 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 patient consent principle.

**A few relevant health initiatives for the 2019-2024 EU mandate**

**Revision of Orphan Medicinal Products Regulation & Paediatric Regulation.**
The review of these two pieces of legislation will be of paramount importance for the future of cancer patients and it is crucial that all oncology stakeholders are involved in the development of policies that will ensure patients continue to benefit from world-leading innovation.

**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.

**European Health Data Space (EHDS)**
The EHDS, proposed by the European Commission in May 2022, holds enormous potential to encourage the use of health data for research and innovation, including in the cancer domain.

**Cancer Mission under Horizon Europe**
A Mission on Cancer was launched as part of the EU’s Horizon Europe programme that will fund a portfolio of activities aimed at boosting innovation and research on cancer.

**Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan**
The Cancer Plan, launched in February 2021, is a key policy strategy for supporting 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 needs.
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, including the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the achievement of “universal health coverage”.

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.

WSO Resolution 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 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 Resolution on Addressing the Global Shortage of, and Access to, Medicines and Vaccines
ESMO raised awareness with WHO Members States of the ESMO recommendations on how to prevent and manage shortages of cancer 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.

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.”

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 or cancer, delivered by an adequate and well-trained workforce.

WHO Model List of Essential 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, 2019-2023
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 COVID-19 Response Resolution
ESMO urged governments to secure the availability of essential cancer and palliative services during COVID-19, and to protect healthcare professionals and people with pre-existing conditions such as cancer.

WHO Cervical Cancer Elimination Resolution
ESMO contributed to the WHO Global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem with technical input for the management of invasive cervical cancer. The WHO Report references the ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines on Cervical Cancer and Palliative Care.

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.

WHO Resolution on Social Determinants of Health
ESMO urged governments to address the social determinants of health in national policies. ESMO supported the IARC webinar on “Socioeconomic Disparities and Cancer” to highlight their impact.

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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For more information about ESMO’s public policy activities, please visit:
https://www.esmo.org/policy