With over 85 million cases and 1.85 million deaths, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives in more ways than one. For the vulnerable, including patients with cancer, the effects have been even more severe. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has recently updated its GLOBOCAN database to increase the number of new cancer cases for 2020 to 19.3 million, of which 4.4 million are in Europe. The after-effects of the pandemic may lead to delayed and accumulated diagnoses of new cancer cases, as well as occurrence of preventable cases, impacting on mortality in the coming years.

The approval of strong vaccine candidates by robust regulatory agencies provides us with hope, indicating the end of this challenging period. But given the limited quantities of the vaccine, ensuring an equitable and fair distribution within a country and globally, will be our next challenge.

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization has published a framework to help guide Member States on the fair and equitable distribution of the scarce resource, i.e. vaccine.

The European Society for Medical Oncology is the leading European professional organisation for medical oncology. Comprising more than 25,000 oncology professionals from over 160 countries, we are the society of reference for oncology education and information. We are committed to supporting our members to develop and advance in a fast-evolving professional environment. For all information concerning ESMO’s work on COVID-19 and Cancer, please refer to: https://www.esmo.org/covid-19-and-cancer


THE CALL TO ACTION HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS*:

*The list of organisations endorsing the ESMO Call to Action is being updated on an ongoing basis (last updated: 16 February 2021).