



ESMO Statement

148th WHO Executive Board Meeting, 18-26 January 2021

Agenda Item 7: Expanding access to effective treatments for cancer and rare and orphan diseases, including medicines, vaccines, medical devices, diagnostics, assistive products, cell- and gene-based therapies and other health technologies; and improving the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines, and other health products

Honourable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) is a global network of more than 25,000 cancer professionals from over 160 countries.

ESMO welcomes WHO's efforts on expanding access to effective treatments for cancer and rare and orphan diseases, including inexpensive, essential cancer medicines which are a public health emergency. To assist Member States in their strategies to appropriately select and prescribe cancer medicines, ESMO offers the following resources on www.esmo.org:

1. ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines that provide evidence-based guidance on the most effective treatment regimens for a wide range of cancers and side-effects
2. ESMO-Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale (ESMO-MCBS), a tool to prioritise cancer medicines according to their level of clinical benefit
3. ESMO strategic recommendations to prevent and manage shortages of cancer medicines

When deciding to include cancer medicines in UHC packages, countries should consider those on the WHO EML, and those with high scores on the ESMO-MCBS.

With regard to rare cancers, as 24% of all new cancer cases are rare, rare cancers belong to both cancers and rare diseases. ESMO has been addressing the issue of rare cancers for over ten years, since the launch of Rare Cancers Europe in 2008 and Rare Cancers Asia in 2018. These multistakeholder initiatives are coordinated by ESMO and bring together all stakeholder groups to address particular challenges faced by the community and jointly create solutions. We commend the WHO proposal to create a global network of centres of excellence and will be pleased to share our expertise gathered within the EU Joint Action on Rare Cancers, Rare Cancers Europe, and ESMO, as well as the 3 European Reference Networks for Rare Cancers.

In addition, ESMO supports the WHO Fair Pricing Forum as a platform to continue discussions on the sustainability of healthcare systems, and will be pleased to contribute as it did in 2019 with its expertise on cancer medicines and management. Thank you.