



**ESMO Statement
for the
Sixth meeting of Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005)
7 December 2023**

Honourable Chairs, Esteemed Delegates,

The European Society for Medical Oncology, representing over 35,000 members from 172 countries, welcomes this opportunity to share our views on the proposed targeted amendments to the International Health Regulations.

As cancer professionals, we urge Member States to support the proposed amendments to the IHR which would build, develop and maintain health systems capacities at **secondary and tertiary care levels**¹, to avoid leaving millions of patients with cancer behind in times of health emergencies. This linguistic precision is crucial to countries preparedness and response planning for disease outbreaks and other acute public health risks, given estimations that one in five people will develop cancer at some point in their lives, that cancer treatment disruption can have a heavy impact on survival, and that patients with cancer are predominantly treated at secondary and tertiary care levels.

Sustainable cancer care services must be integrated into preparedness and response planning for both health emergencies and pandemics, to ensure:

- adequate, continued, and timely access to cancer and palliative care services and medicines,
- the continuance of existing clinical trials, avoiding competition with resources required for health emergencies, and
- support to healthcare workforce wellbeing.

Thank you.

¹ [Article by Article Compilation of Proposed Amendments to the International Health Regulations \(2005\) submitted by States Parties in the context of Decision WHA75\(9\)](#) Annex 1 Theme F. Health Systems Capacities.