ESMO Statement
for the
Seventh meeting of Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005)
5 February 2024

Honourable Chairs, Esteemed Delegates,

The European Society for Medical Oncology welcomes this opportunity to reiterate our call to Member States to support the proposed amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR) which would build, develop, and maintain health systems capacities at secondary and tertiary care levels.

The political commitment, the rationale, and the technical guidance for implementation are all siding with this.

With the 2023 UN Political Declaration on Pandemics countries committed to take measures to enhance the resilience of national health systems for pandemics and other health emergencies at primary, secondary and tertiary health care levels, referring to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030).

The Sendai Framework, adopted by 187 UN Member States in 2015, notes that disaster risk management should be integrated in the implementation of the IHR, and that people with life-threatening or chronic disease should have access to life-saving services during and after disasters. And the WHO technical guidance notes on the Sendai framework highlight the importance of integrating disaster risk management into primary, secondary and tertiary health care.

It is thereby logical, that the amended IHR should reference both secondary and tertiary levels of care so that the millions of patients with cancer, who are predominately treated at these levels, are not left behind during health emergencies.

Thank you.