



H.E. Ambassador Olivier Maes
Co-Chair, Fourth High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases
Permanent Mission of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the United Nations
17 Beekman Place
New York, NY 10022
United States

Lugano, 7 February 2025

Subject: Addressing critical issues in global cancer prevention and control in the 2025 Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases

Dear H.E. Ambassador Olivier Maes,

On behalf of [the European Society for Medical Oncology](#), representing over 40 000 cancer professionals in 179 countries, we congratulate you on your appointment as co-facilitator of the intergovernmental process in preparation for the Fourth High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health (UN HLM on NCDs).

Ahead of this meeting, we would like to take the opportunity to convey our key concerns and recommendations on cancer prevention and control.

Cancer is a leading cause of mortality worldwide, with [one in five people](#) likely to develop the disease during their lifetime. As such, it is essential that the Political Declaration following the UN HLM on NCDs clearly addresses the needs of patients with cancer globally by focusing on these five key themes:

1) Universal Health Coverage

Comprehensive cancer care services should be included in national health benefit packages and should cover prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, palliative care, and medicines – including opioids for pain management and post-treatment medicines. The services should be accessible and not cause financial hardship to patients.



2) Cancer prevention

Since prevention remains the most cost-effective strategy, with [30-50% of cancer cases being avoidable](#), governments should accelerate action on:

- Comprehensive tobacco control, including bans on e-cigarette advertising and online sales.
- Cancer prevention with regards to alcohol consumption through mandatory labeling, public awareness campaigns, and protection of public health policy from industry interference.
- Air pollution control, aligning regional and national policies with WHO air quality standards, particularly on particulate matter (PM2.5).
- Implementation of free Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and Hepatitis B (HBV) vaccination programs, and
- Introducing stronger measures against carcinogenic environmental exposures, such as asbestos and microplastics.

3) Health systems

Education, training, retention, and the mental well-being of oncology professionals should be prioritized to combat burnout and to ensure quality cancer care delivery. In addition, cancer services must be integrated into health emergencies and pandemics preparedness and response planning.

4) Global research and clinical trials

It is critical to develop global regulatory frameworks that facilitate the involvement of currently underserved groups - especially patients with rare cancers that account for about [25-30% of all cancer diagnoses and 25% of cancer deaths](#), representing a substantial burden of disease - in innovative clinical trials. Enabling better global data sharing and supporting independent research is vital in this regard.

5) Monitoring and evaluation

Comprehensive population-based cancer registries should be strengthened to track incidence, relapse, and mortality rates. Such data will underpin evidence-based policymaking and assess the effectiveness of national cancer control strategies.

Your leadership in steering the development of the Political Declaration will be vital in ensuring that these issues receive the attention they deserve. We thank you for your commitment to the prevention and control of NCDs and stand ready to support your efforts by sharing our expertise on cancer management.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Fabrice André
ESMO President

Prof Jean-Yves Blay
ESMO Director of Public Policy