

**AIM**Healthcare and
social benefits
for all

PRESS RELEASE

AIM SUPPORTS THE NEED FOR A EUROPEAN APPROACH TO FIGHT CANCER

The European Commission launches today the first phase of its awaited Cancer Plan with its conference: "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: Let's strive for more". AIM, the leading international association of healthcare mutuals and sickness funds, welcomes the intentions of the Commission to put the fight against the Cancer plague high on its agenda. AIM looks forward to contributing to the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan consultation.

Prevention is key in the fight against cancer

AIM pleads for a central role for prevention in shaping the European Cancer Plan by triggering Member State's commitment to "do more" notably by devoting more resources to preventive measures. Indeed, statistics show that 40% of cancers are preventable.¹ There is a clear added value in devoting more effort to preventive measures, an area which is yet often underfinanced.

The Cancer Plan is a real opportunity to implement health in all policies

AIM is convinced that the Cancer Plan can only be a success, if putting health at the centre of all policies becomes a reality. Furthermore, AIM subscribes to embed the Cancer Plan in a broader political approach. There are many external factors which also impact both people's health and health inequities, such as the environment, the availability of healthy products, the information provided to consumers on those products and their quality (e.g. fat content, salt, sugar, hormone disruptors etc.). A wide area of policies has, direct-or indirectly, a clear impact on cancer incidence. It is not a "stand alone" agenda. AIM is pleased to see that the European Commission adopts a more transversal approach in its work programme, linking the Cancer Plan to the implementation of the Pillar of Social Rights and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Cancer Plan must make sure that we have access to the medicines we need

The Cancer Plan should include solutions for fairer prices of more effective cancer medicines across the EU. The total costs of cancer medicines more than doubled between 2008 and 2018 in Europe² and cancer medicines account for a growing share of the direct costs of cancer. At the same time, high cost of cancer medicines is a significant barrier to access. It either leads to governments not providing the medicine to all eligible patients, or to patients having to pay for the medicines out-of-pocket. According to WHO, 35% of the cancer medicines approved by the European Medicines Agency in 2009–2013 had established prolonged survival at the time of approval. Only 10% of the same approved cancer medicines had evidence of improvement in the quality of life.³ However, one should not forget that survival was often a few months or sometimes only weeks longer in comparison with already existing medicines.

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1. [A Strong Social Europe for just transitions](#), European Commission, 2020

2. Hofmarcher, T., Brådvik, G., Svedman, C., Lindgren, P., Jönsson, B., Wilking, N. Comparator Report on Cancer in Europe 2019 –Disease Burden, Costs and Access to Medicines.IHE Report 2019:7. IHE: Lund, Sweden

3. [World Health Organization](#) (2018). Technical report: pricing of cancer medicines and its impacts: a comprehensive technical report for the World Health Assembly Resolution 70.12: operative paragraph 2.9 on pricing approaches and their impacts on availability and affordability of medicines for the prevention and treatment of cancer. World Health Organization.

AIM is the umbrella organisation of health mutuals and health insurance funds in Europe and in the world. Through its 57 members from 30 countries, AIM provides health coverage to 240 million people in the world and 209 million in Europe through compulsory and/or complementary health insurance and managing health and social facilities. AIM strives to defend the access to healthcare for all through solidarity-based and non-profit health insurance. Its mission is to provide a platform for members to exchange on common issues and to represent their interests and values in the European and international Institutions.