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49.3 ESSO Announcements

Time to act-An open letter calls for recognition of surgical oncology in the EU

On behalf of the surgical oncology community, patients' organisations and the Challenge Cancer Parliamentary Intergroup, an open letter "**Time to act: Maximizing the benefits of surgical oncology for cancer patients in Europe**" is released on the 3rd of February 2023, in conjunction with the World Cancer Day.

The letter outlines the importance of recognising surgical oncology as a specialist discipline in the EU, urging the European Commission to take necessary steps to ensure an optimal patient-centred cancer care pathway.

In view of the implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan (EBCP), the letter identified three priorities that fully align with those raised by the EU Parliament in art. 65 of the BECA Report, calling for immediate action at the EU level so that all European cancer patients can benefit from optimal cancer surgery:

- Recognising Surgical Oncology as a specialist discipline across Europe;
- Harmonising education and training standards in Surgical Oncology across Europe;
- Harmonising certification and accreditation systems for Surgical Oncologists across Europe.

It is the outcome of ESSO policy event "*Time for Change: Addressing the value of surgical oncology in the treatment and care of cancer*"

on 26 October 2022 at the European Parliament, which was Hosted by Mr. Cristian Busoi, MEP, Chair of the Challenge Cancer Intergroup and endorsed by the Challenge Cancer Parliamentary Intergroup.

Supported by 32 Members of the European Parliament, the open letter is addressed to Ms. Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, and Ms. Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth by Mr. Cristian Busoi.

This is our response to the Commission's call of defeating cancer together. We share responsibility in this fight, and the surgical oncology community is fully committed. Now we are expecting concrete actions from European Leaders to unleash the full potential of quality cancer surgery.

With the open letter, we would like to draw the European Commission's attention to the beneficial outcomes of recognising surgical oncology as a specialty, which we consider vital for the delivery of an efficient and patient-centred cancer strategy that the EBCP promised.

View the open letter to Commissioner Kyriakides at: <https://www.essoweb.org/media/documents/open-letter-to-commissioner-stella-kyriakides.pdf>

View the open letter to Commissioner Gabriel at: <https://www.essoweb.org/media/documents/open-letter-to-commissioner-mariya-gabriel.pdf>