



# The European Union role in cancer prevention

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- **Just over 3.4 million new cases of cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin cancers) in Europe in 2012**
- **Estimated total number of cancer deaths in Europe in 2012 was 1.75 million, of which 56% (976,000) were in men and 44% (779,000) in women.**
- **Lung cancer, with an estimated 353,000 deaths (one fifth of the total) was the most frequent cause of death from cancer in Europe in 2012, followed by colorectal cancer (almost 215,000 deaths, 12.2%), breast cancer (131,000, 7.5%) and stomach cancer (107,000, 6.1%).**

**Source: Cancer incidence and mortality patterns in Europe: Estimates for 40 countries in 2012 – IARC – European Journal of Cancer, February 2013**

**<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959804913000075>**

# A reduceable risk

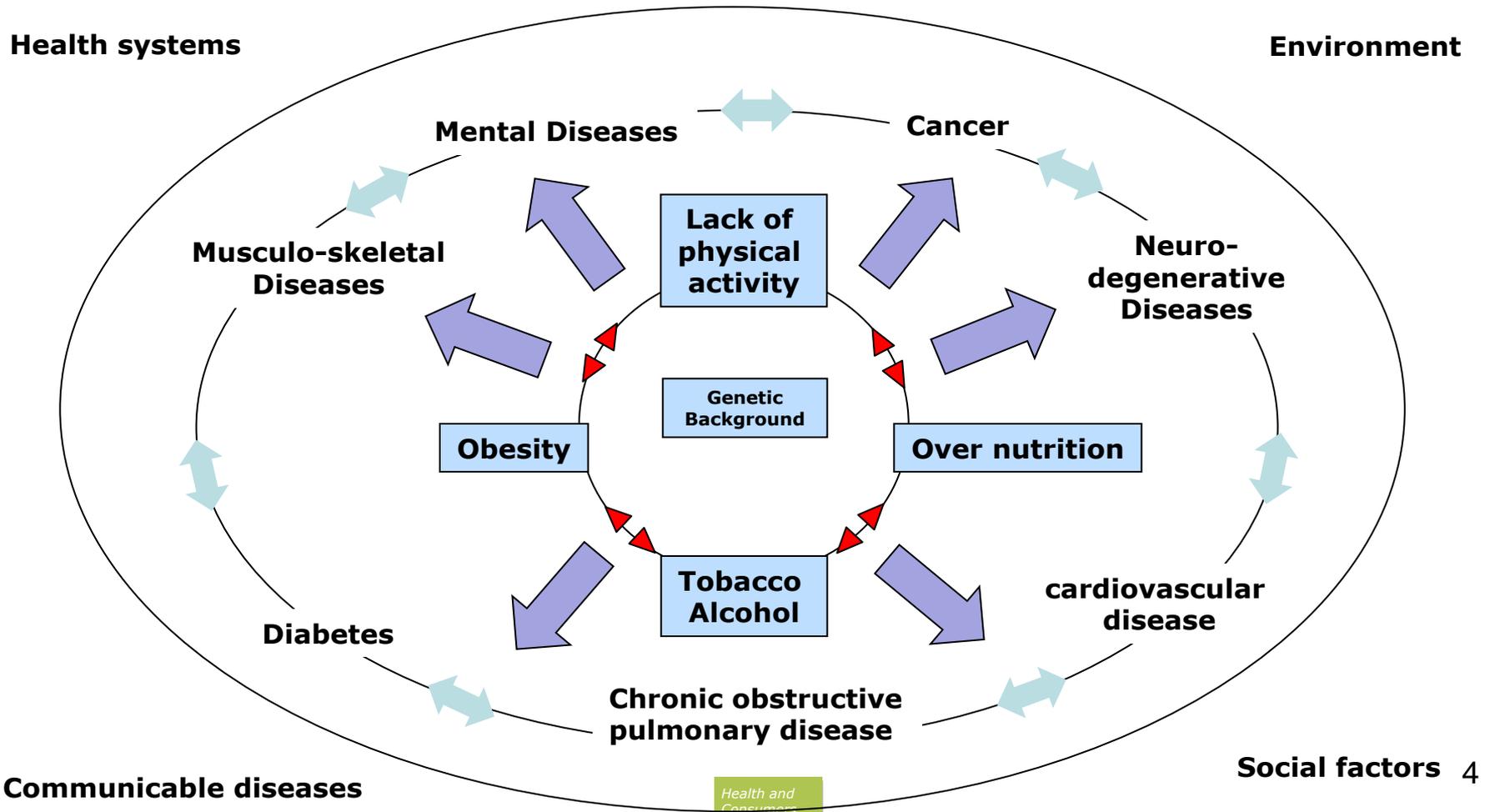


**At the incidence rates prevailing nowadays in the European Union, it would be expected that 1 in 3 men and 1 in 4 women would be directly affected by cancer in the first 75 years of life.**

**Many cancers are preventable and risks can be reduced:**

- Cancer is caused by many factors and therefore its prevention has to address **lifestyle, occupational and environmental causes.**
- It has been estimated that **around one third of all cancers could be prevented by modifying or avoiding key risk factors** such as smoking, being overweight, low fruit and vegetable intake, physical inactivity and alcohol consumption.

# Major chronic diseases



# EU work on chronic diseases

- Action on **risk factors** and health determinants
  - Nutrition and physical activity strategy
  - Alcohol related harm strategy
  - Tobacco legislation and campaigns
- EU strategy on health inequalities
- Disease specific initiatives
  - **Cancer partnership**
- Health systems
  - European Innovation Partnership on active and healthy ageing
  - Cross border health care – Reference networks
- Reflection process on Chronic disease
- Financial mechanisms (EU Health and Research programmes)



- Since 1985, cancer has been a priority issue for EU health policy: the European Council in Milan decided to launch **the first "Europe Against Cancer" programme**, operational in 1987.
- The first 'European Action Plan Against Cancer' was adopted for the period 1987-1989 and the Second for the period 1990-1994.
- These plans stimulated the adoption of the first European Code Against Cancer (1987), Directives against smoking (1992), marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (1989), maximum levels for pesticide residues in and on certain products (1990) and exposure to carcinogens at work (1990)
- Today, cancer work is based on the 2009 Commission communication on a **European Partnership for Action Against Cancer**, which led to two Joint actions – an **Implementation report** on the partnership (and on cancer screening) was published in September 2014
- EU action on cancer is coordinated in the **Expert Group on Cancer Control** with Member States and Stakeholders

# The cancer code



As a result of the first European cancer plan, **the European Code Against Cancer** was originally drawn-up and endorsed by the European Commission high-level Committee of Cancer Experts in 1987.

The European Code is a cancer specific **prevention tool**, based on scientific evidence, which provides advice to citizens on how to prevent cancer, around **two** very clear **messages**:

- ❖ **Certain cancers may be avoided – and health in general can be improved – by adopting healthier lifestyles.**
- ❖ **Cancers may be cured, or the prospects of cure greatly increased, if they are detected early.**

Three version of the code have been produced until 2003.

The EU Health Programme has supported the **revision** of the third version **of the European Code Against Cancer** through a grant to the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

# The cancer code



**A new version of the European Cancer Code, based on the most updated scientific knowledge, has been launched on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014.  
Soon to be available in 23 languages.**

## EUROPEAN CODE AGAINST CANCER

### 12 ways to reduce your cancer risk

- 1 Do not smoke. Do not use any form of tobacco.
- 2 Make your home smoke free. Support smoke-free policies in your workplace.
- 3 Take action to be a healthy body weight.
- 4 Be physically active in everyday life. Limit the time you spend sitting.
- 5 Have a healthy diet:
  - Eat plenty of whole grains, pulses, vegetables and fruits.
  - Limit high-calorie foods (foods high in sugar or fat) and avoid sugary drinks.
  - Avoid processed meat; limit red meat and foods high in salt.
- 6 If you drink alcohol of any type, limit your intake. Not drinking alcohol is better for cancer prevention.
- 7 Avoid too much sun, especially for children. Use sun protection. Do not use sunbeds.
- 8 In the workplace, protect yourself against cancer-causing substances by following health and safety instructions.
- 9 Find out if you are exposed to radiation from naturally high radon levels in your home. Take action to reduce high radon levels.
- 10 For women:
  - Breastfeeding reduces the mother's cancer risk. If you can, breastfeed your baby.
  - Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) increases the risk of certain cancers. Limit use of HRT.
- 11 Ensure your children take part in vaccination programmes for:
  - Hepatitis B (for newborns)
  - Human papillomavirus (HPV) (for girls).
- 12 Take part in organized cancer screening programmes for:
  - Bowel cancer (men and women)
  - Breast cancer (women)
  - Cervical cancer (women).

The European Code Against Cancer focuses on actions that individual citizens can take to help prevent cancer. Successful cancer prevention requires these individual actions to be supported by governmental policies and actions.

Find out more about the European Code Against Cancer at: <http://cancer-code-europe.iarc.fr>



These recommendations are the result of a project coordinated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and co-financed by the



## Features of the cancer code

Update of scientific evidence (revisit existing recommendations and potentially adding new ones)

Focus on citizen

Present each message in a manner that promotes effective public communication

**NEW:**

Explanations and additional guidance as Questions & Answers

Advice on how individuals can implement recommendations

**Addressing the public at large in a citizen-friendly format, the Code is a key communication tool in the prevention of cancer and should constitute the major tool for disseminating preventive measures and contributing to change the perception of cancer.**

# Tobacco

## Legislation

- *Tobacco products*
- *Advertising*
- *new Tobacco Products Directive*



## *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control*

*Green Paper towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke (2007) - **Council Recommendation** (2009)*

Awareness raising ***"Ex smokers are unstoppable"***

# The Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health issues (2007)

**Nutrition and Physical Activity in all policies**

**High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity**

External Evaluation of the Strategy:  
- Efficiency proved  
- Need to boost the work



**Monitoring system and evidence base**

**EC Programmes/fundings (Health programme, Research programme)**

**EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health**



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## EU Strategy on alcohol: Objectives



- Protect **young people, children and the unborn child**



- Reduce injuries and deaths from alcohol related road traffic accidents



- Prevent **alcohol related harm** among adults and reduce impact on **workplace**

Know your limits



UK Chief Medical Officers  
recommended  
alcohol do not regularly  
exceed:  
Men 2-4 units daily  
Women 1-3 units daily  
Avoid alcohol if pregnant or  
trying to conceive  
[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

- Inform, educate and raise **awareness**

- Develop **common evidence base**

Health Programme  
2008-2013  
Together for Health



- Other key determinants are **occupational and environmental factors**, such as exposure to carcinogenic and mutagenic substances, and indoor and outdoor air quality.
- In the occupational field, the evaluation of the EU Health and Safety Strategy 2007-2012 showed that it achieved relevant goals and identified the need to continue to focus in **prevention of occupational diseases, cancer being of major importance**, in the framework of coordinated actions with other EU Health and Environment Strategies.
- For that purpose, the Commission has adopted a **new EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020** .



- **Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 29 April 2004, on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work** sets out a number of preventive measures to eliminate or minimise work-related exposures to chemical carcinogens and mutagens.
- In addition, the **list of substances classified as carcinogens or mutagens is being updated** in line with scientific evidence in Part 3 of Annex VI to Regulation No 1272/2008 (CLP) on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures .

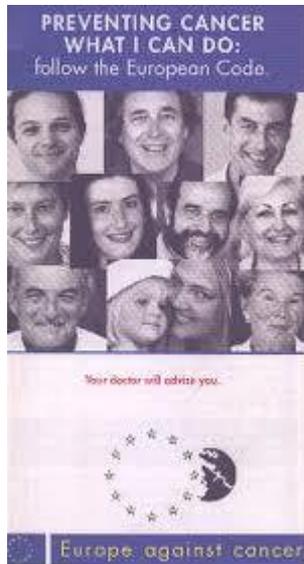


- In December 2003, **the Council adopted a Recommendation on cancer screening**, which sets out principles of best practice in the early detection of cancer, and invites all Member States to take common action to implement national population-based screening programmes for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer, with appropriate quality assurance at all levels.
- To assist Member States with the implementation of screening programmes, the Commission has produced **European Guidelines for quality assurance for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening** as benchmarks on how to go about screening.
- **The European Commission initiative on Breast Cancer** to Develop the new version of the European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis, and a voluntary European Quality Assurance scheme for Breast Cancer Services underpinned by accreditation and evidence-based guidelines



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## The European Code Against Cancer dissemination around Europe



### Potential Solutions to Fight Cancer Breast Cancer Screening



Deirdre O'Connell Vice President EUROPA DONNA - The European Breast Cancer Coalition

2<sup>nd</sup> Summit 3-4 Sept 2011  
Central Palazzo del Parlamento Europeo, Brussels  
Admission: Free (with a Contribution of 10€ for the Dinner) (Bookings)



# Working together on cancer prevention

*Use the Code and the background material – available soon in 24 languages*

*Work together on risk factors – take part in EU action on tobacco, alcohol, nutrition and physical activity*

*Secondary prevention and screening*

*Work across chronic diseases where useful*

*Thank you!*

