



# Inequalities Network



Nicolò Matteo Luca Battisti, Inequalities  
Network Co-Chair



# Inequalities Network



Chaired by **Nicolò Battisti** and **Sarah Collen**, ECO's Inequalities Network is comprised of **six workstreams**:

- Women and Cancer
- Men and Cancer
- LGBTIQ
- Ethnicity
- Rural Cancer Care
- European Cancer Pulse



# Women and Cancer





# 'Women & Cancer: 12 million reasons for action' European Parliament Event (6 March)

- 2 vice-chairs of the SANT Committee (MEPs Jerkovic & Metz)
- 10 speakers including the two W&C co-chairs, European Women's Lobby, YCE, Eurocarers, EIGE...
- Over 60 participants in person
- Media coverage in Politico





## ADDRESSING WOMEN'S CANCER RIGHTS IN THE NEXT EUROPEAN GENDER EQUALITY AGENDA

In her Mission Letter to Commissioner for Equality Hadja Lahbib, President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen called for a [Roadmap for Women's Rights](#) to be unveiled on [International Women's Day 2025](#). This roadmap is set to lay the groundwork for a [new Gender Equality Strategy beyond 2025](#), with [discrimination in health](#) finally recognised as a [critical issue](#).

Cancer remains the second leading cause of death for women in the European Union. And each year additional, [1.2 million women are diagnosed with the disease](#), on top of the estimated [12 million living with it](#)<sup>1</sup>. However, cancer doesn't just affect those who are diagnosed. It also impacts the families and the caregivers. The call for action has never been more urgent.

In advance of International Women's Day, the European Cancer Organisation calls for five essential cancer rights for women to be recognised in the EU's gender equality agenda:

1. **The Right to Access HPV Vaccination** – Cervical cancer remains one of the most preventable cancers, yet over 28,000 women in Europe were diagnosed with the disease in 2022<sup>2</sup>. Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is working to eliminate human papillomavirus (HPV) by ensuring at least 90% of girls are vaccinated by 2030. Universal access to HPV vaccination must be guaranteed. No woman or girl should face a preventable cancer.
2. **The Right to Access Screening** – In 2021 in the EU, 83% of Danish women aged 50 to 69 years old engaged in breast cancer screening, compared to 20,6% in Bulgaria<sup>3</sup>. A similar gap exists for cervical cancer: in 2022, screening rates reached 78,8% in Sweden, while only 10,9% of women in Poland were screened. Access to breast and gynaecological cancer screening, conducted according to EU guidelines, must be recognised as an undisputed women's right.
3. **The Right to Access Fertility Treatment** – It has been estimated that 70%-75% of young cancer survivors are interested in parenthood, yet that 80% of them are affected by reduced fertility<sup>4</sup>. Every woman should have the right to access personalised fertility care. All women should also be counselled on fertility preservation, empowering them to make informed decisions about their cancer treatment and reproductive future.
4. **The Right to be Recognised and Protected in Your Carer Role** – Women's earnings remain 12.7% lower than men's<sup>5</sup>, leaving 32 million women caregivers across Europe at heightened risk of poverty. European countries must ensure legal recognition, adequate support, and social security rights for women caregivers, with the support of the EU.
5. **The Right to Equality in the Oncology Workplace** – Women make up 70% of the global<sup>6</sup> healthcare workforce, yet they earn 20% less than their male colleagues. National health ministries, professional societies and universities should establish targets and strategies to achieve gender equality, including equal leadership opportunities.

## The '5 Women Cancer Rights': a call for action





# Overview of 2025 activities : complet

1. Response to the **European Commission's Consultation on a Gender Equality Strategy for 2026-2030**, promoting the '5 Women Cancer Rights'
2. **Meetings on gendered-marketing** with alcohol trade associations in Brussels (Spirits Europe, CEEV...)
3. **Women & Cancer Community 365 Roundtable** on 8 July: Report finalised for ESMO 2025 & Cancer Summit 2025
4. Amendments successfully sent and tabled by the **FEMM Committee**:

Draft Report on a Gender Equality Strategy for 2026-2030  
Draft Report on a Disability Strategy post 2024  
Draft Report on an Anti-Poverty Strategy  
Draft Report on Advancing Towards a Care Society





# Overview of 2025 activities : complet

## 1. **Pink October** month:

Video campaign of interviews from 6 March 2025 event featuring MEPs Metz & Jerkovic

Collaboration with Europa Donna on 15 October event for Breast Health Day

## 2. **European Cancer Summit Inequalities Session** 2025 focusing on Women & Cancer & LGBTIQ

## 3. ECO team to **table amendments on the upcoming FEMM report** on '**Gender Inequalities in Health**' (pub 13.10.25 tbc) in collaboration the Men & Cancer workstream







# Plan for 2026 activities

1. Continuing lobbying activities on the upcoming **Gender Equality Strategy 2026**
2. **Completion of Women & Cancer Index** (potential release for international women's day 2026)
3. Integration of '**gender mainstreaming**' element on the upcoming Multi-annual Financial Framework for 2028-2034 activity
4. Position Paper on **gendered marketing**







# Men and Cancer





# European Prostate Awareness Day



- 3 September 2025, European Parliament
- Hosted by the Intergroup on Cancer
- Brought together experts, policymakers, and patient advocates to discuss how improved prostate cancer screening is turning the tide for men in the EU.





# Policy Recommendations on Prostate Cancer



Following the event, a Policy Report would bring together main takeaways and key recommendations made during the conference.

Some of key recommendations include:

- Prioritise **patients' quality of life**: Screening and treatment strategies must focus not only on survival but also on preserving dignity, reducing suffering, and ensuring effective psychosocial support, guided by shared decision-making
- Secure **sustainable EU and national funding** is necessary to extend and expand PRAISE-U pilots into long-term screening programmes across the EU.
- Coordination between regions and centres is necessary to apply evidence-based screening programmes and **European cooperation can facilitate knowledge sharing** and in building capacity of coordination teams.



# LGBTIQ Workstream







# European LGBTIQ cancer survey

We need your help to address LGBTIQ cancer inequalities!

The **European Cancer Organisation** is conducting a pan-European survey to:

- Generate **actionable policy insights** on key barriers and attitudes towards cancer care among LGBTIQ individuals.
- **Develop high-level, evidence-based recommendations** to advocate for equitable cancer care access for LGBTIQ individuals.

## Help us by completing and disseminating the survey!

The survey is:

- Open to **all LGBTIQ citizens and cancer patients** living in Europe.
- Developed together with **leading LGBTIQ community representatives and experts**.



**Please contact**

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# LGBTIQ and Cancer Survey

## Why do we need this project?



The LGBTIQ workstream is starting a **pan-European research project** based on the fact that:

- LGBTIQ individuals in Europe face **discrimination and barriers in healthcare** due to inadequate training, non-inclusive policies, and a lack of safe spaces.
- 45% of LGBTIQ people in the EU report difficulties accessing healthcare, especially trans women, men, and intersex persons (EU FRA, *LGBTIQ at a crossroads*, 2024).
- **More specific data is needed** to better understand barriers to cancer prevention and care for LGBTIQ communities in Europe to ensure equitable health access.
- Previous data focuses on healthcare professionals' attitudes towards LGBTIQ patients



# LGBTIQ and Cancer Survey



- The survey is available in English and other 17 European languages, including Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swedish
- The link to the survey will be accompanied by a **dissemination toolkit**, comprised of visuals, social media ready-to-post texts, flyer, standard presentation slide, and other materials and guidelines



# Ethnicity Workstream







# Ethnicity workstream



- ECO, together with the European Public Health Alliance, launched **a new event report**
- Based on a webinar hosted on **9<sup>th</sup> April 2025**, as part of Global Public Health Week, titled ***Combatting ethnic disparities in healthcare: a case study of prostate and breast cancer***
- The discussion centred on sharing **best practices** and **engaging the community**, with contributions from experts in breast and prostate cancer, patient advocates, policy and stakeholder initiatives on **diversity, equality and inclusion**, as well as civil society representatives, all working to address ethnic inequities in cancer care in Europe and beyond.

For more information and to be involved, please contact: [alexandra.eni@europeancancer.org](mailto:alexandra.eni@europeancancer.org)





# ECO's response to the European Commission's consultation on an Anti-Racism Strategy for 2026-2030

In July 25, ECO provided its response to the European Commission's consultation on the next Anti-Racism Strategy for 2026-2030.

ECO notably highlighted the lack of health consideration and **raised the importance of addressing racial discrimination in cancer care in the new framework**, by:

- Calling for health and cancer care to be embedded in the strategy as a cross-cutting priority
- Calling for improved ethnicity data collection in cancer registries and health systems
- Calling for increased diversity in clinical trials participation
- Calling for equity-focused cancer screening guidance
- Calling for a translation of EU guidelines and codes into non-official languages





# Rural Cancer Care





# Rural Cancer Care

## What does cancer care look like in rural Europe?



📌 **27% of Europeans** live in rural areas - yet healthcare access remains unequal


📌 **"Health workforce shortages** are particularly **severe** in **rural areas**, further **worsening healthcare access.**" – Health at a Glance 2024 (OECD)



**Literature shows that these challenges contribute to:**

 Higher cancer **incidence** and **mortality**

**The data gap:**

 Most studies on rural cancer care come from the **US**, **Canada**, and **Australia**

 Europe lacks tailored data and solutions





# Rural Cancer Care

## Closing the data and policy gap: next steps considered



	STEPS	OUTCOMES	TIMELINE (indicative)
1	<b>Literature review:</b> Qualitative and quantitative data	📖 Potential academic publication	Summer/Autumn 2025
	<b>Coalition-building:</b> Stakeholder mapping and outreach	👥 Stakeholder mapping	
2	<b>Workshop:</b> Cancer patients/representatives from rural areas, HCPs, researchers, regional health authorities	👥 Creation of expert group	Winter 2025
3	<b>Policy research project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Quantitative:</b> Pan-European survey patients/citizen about rural cancer care issues</li><li>• <b>Qualitative:</b> Interviews and/or focus groups in specific regions</li></ul>	📖 Potential second academic publication	Winter 2025/Early 2026 - Winter 2026
		🏛️ Policy recommendations	
4	<b>Policy report launch</b>	🏛️ Policy report 🏛️ Policymakers' engagement plan	November 2026

For more information and to be involved, please contact  
[juliana.desa@europeancancer.org](mailto:juliana.desa@europeancancer.org)



# European Cancer Pulse





Bringing forward the data

# European Cancer Pulse



## Where are we now?

280+ indicators

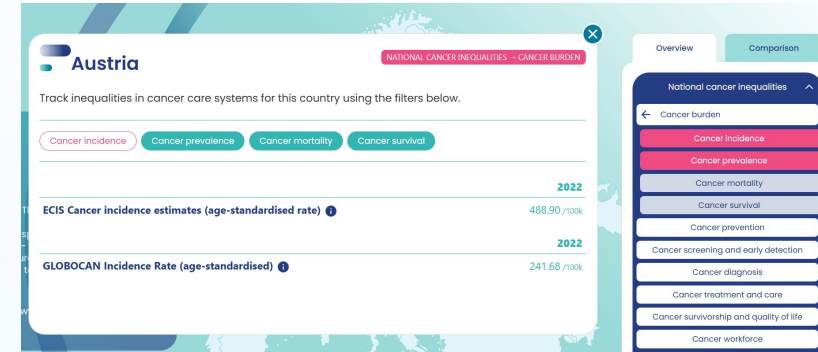
13.000 + data points



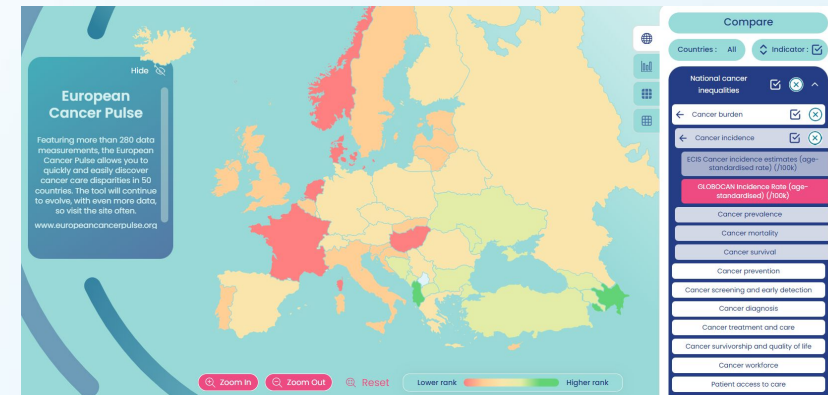
## Where are we going?

- Overall data update
- New functionalities (including indicator evolution over time)
- Integration of policy indexes
- Potential use of AI

## Country overview



## Comparison mode

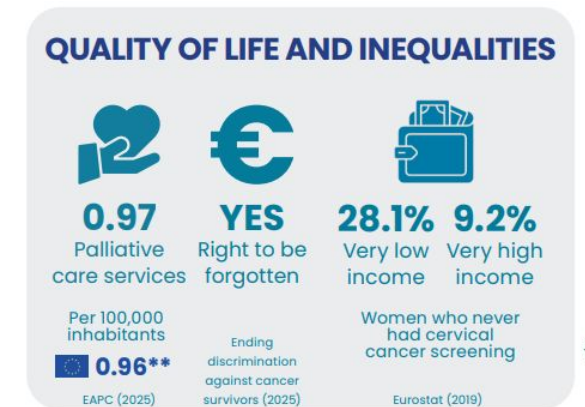
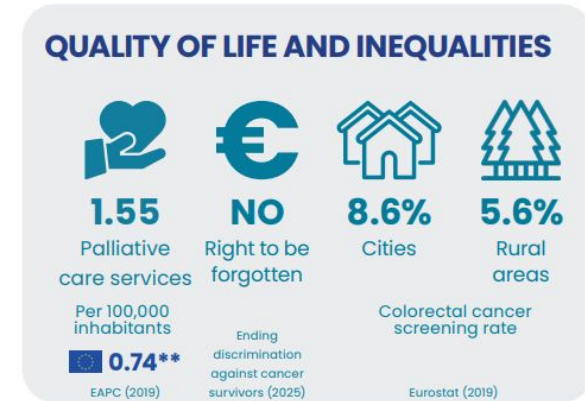




# European Cancer Pulse: Country Reports



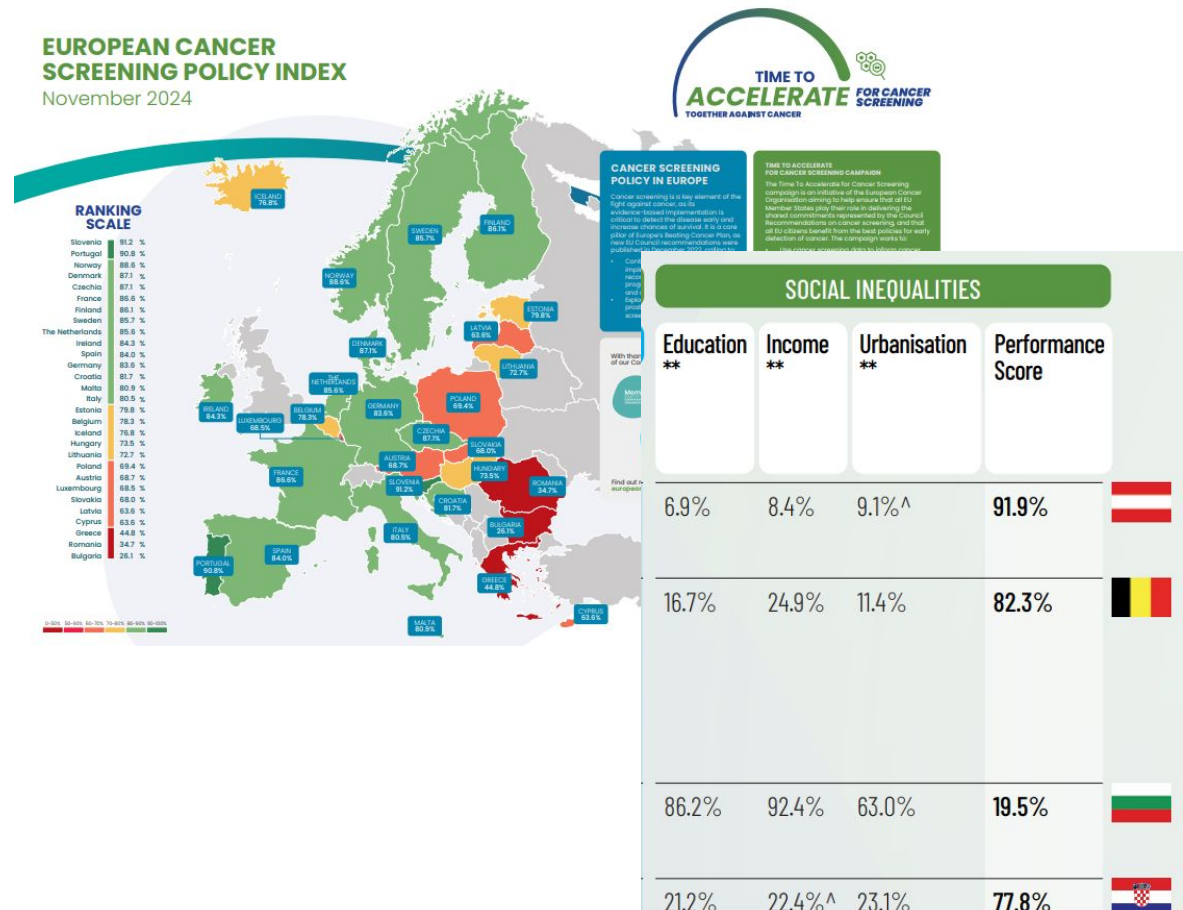
- **National factsheets** with key data from the European Cancer Pulse
- Informing the **Time to Accelerate: Together Against Cancer** pan-European ECO campaign
- **Produced together with local stakeholders**
- **3 new country reports in 2025:** Poland, Cyprus and Finland (10 November 2025) **with a focus on inequalities**







# European Cancer Screening Policy Index and inequalities



**Education, income, and urbanisation** were taken into account in each country's score.  
(Eurostat 2019 data)



# Inequalities topics featured at the European Cancer Summit 2025



**19-20 November, Brussels and online**

19 Nov 9:40–10:55	<b>Breaking Barriers: Confronting Bias, Seen and Unseen, in Cancer Care</b>	<b>Women and Cancer</b>  <b>LGBTIQ</b>
19 Nov 14:00 –14:30	<b>Spotlight: What does cancer care look like in rural Europe?</b>	<b>Rural Cancer Care</b>
19 Nov 16:30-17:30	<b>Special meeting: Ageing and Cancer: Bridging Evidence and EU Policy</b>	<b>Ageing and Cancer</b>
19 Nov 16:50-17:35	<b>Spotlight: Building Momentum to Improve Men's Health and Reduce Prostate Cancer</b>	<b>Men and Cancer</b>
20 Nov 9:30-10:00	<b>Spotlight: Informing Cancer Policy Change through Data and Analysis: Insights from the European Cancer Pulse (ECO) and the OBS-PACE project</b>	<b>European Cancer Pulse</b>



Thank you!