



# A BRIGHTER FUTURE

## The European Cancer Plan for Children and Adolescents

In Europe, over 35,000 children and teenagers are diagnosed with cancer every year. Commonly perceived as a disease mainly affecting adults and elderly patients, cancer is the main cause of death by disease for adolescents and children older than 1 year. More and more survive cancer, but many of them suffer from side effects (chronic conditions, fertility issues, etc.) on the long term, that are severe enough to affect the quality of their lives.



The battle to cure all paediatric cancer patients presents many challenges. The accessibility of high-quality cancer care needs to be equal across Europe, to ensure the same standards of care and opportunities to children in different countries. Survivors need to be closely followed up even after many years through organised follow up care models, in order to address and prevent the long-term consequences of cancer treatment. More funds for specialised paediatric oncology research and drug development, often

driven by academia, are urgently needed, and children's access to innovative therapies, which could potentially save many young lives, should be increased.

The European Society for Paediatric Oncology (SIOPE) set to address these and the other existing obstacles to better outcomes for children and adolescents with cancer via its long-term Strategic Plan 'A European Cancer Plan for Children and Adolescents'. Widely endorsed by parent and patients advocates as well as paediatric cancer professionals from all over Europe, this Plan aims to increase the cure rate and the quality of long term survival of children and young people with cancer by 2025.

SIOPE actively engages to influence EU policies and legislation which could serve this purpose. In this context, on 7 September 2016 SIOPE co-organised – together with Members of the European Parliament Against Cancer (MAC) Group and Cancer Research UK – the European Parliament Conference 'Review of the EU Paediatric Medicines Regulation: Let's do more for children with cancer' hosted by MEP Elena Gentile. The event addressed the effects and potential review of the EU Paediatric Regulation, aiming to ensure a better access to innovative therapies for childhood cancer patients – in line with the SIOPE Strategic Plan. Stakeholders and policy makers at the event – including MEP Elena Gentile, MEP Françoise Grossetête and MEP Caterina Chinnici – showed their support to SIOPE. It is imperative that the European Commission and other involved stakeholders take into account the needs of the paediatric cancer community when looking at the Regulation during its upcoming review. In the months to come, the issue is set to remain high on the EU political agenda with the intention to save children's lives and let survivors live to the fullest.

In the month of September, Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, you can also contribute to achieve the SIOPE Strategic



Plan's objectives. Thanks to your support, we can finance research fellows and carry out important projects and initiatives to improve young people's chances of surviving this disease. If you think too that children and adolescents with cancer deserve a brighter future, join the SIOPE community and contribute to what we do ([www.siope.eu/donations](http://www.siope.eu/donations)).

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