

The European Society of Radiology – Presenting the case for lung cancer screening

Event Report

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: Focus on lung cancer prevention and research

Wednesday, 6 November 2019

8:00 – 9:30

European Parliament



On 6 November 2019, the **European Society of Radiology (ESR)**, the **European Respiratory Society (ERS)** and **Lung Cancer Europe** jointly organised a breakfast roundtable *“Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan: focus on lung cancer prevention and research”*, hosted by the Member of the European Parliament **Claudia Gamon** (EPP, Austria), at the European Parliament in Brussels. The event brought together academics, politicians, policymakers, patient representatives as well as representatives of industry and pharmaceutical organisations to address measures required to strengthen our approach at every stage of the disease.

MEP Claudia Gamon kicked-off the 90-minute event by emphasising the need for increased research to detect lung cancer at an early stage, and the importance of the use of screening whenever possible. She further underlined the strong potential for lung cancer screening considering the many related European Commission initiatives taken up successfully in the past and the latest scientific evidence.





Prof. Marie-Pierre REVEL, Past-president of the European Society of Thoracic Imaging (ESTI) and one of the ESR experts on lung cancer, highlighted that lung cancer is the first cause of cancer death in the European Union (EU) and that it is curable only when detected before the onset of symptoms. Lung cancer screening by low-dose computed tomography complies with the World Health Organisation (WHO) requirements for the launch of a national programme. Moreover, three recent European trials with an efficient strategy that reduces false positives through a software analysis of lesion volume and growth have proved beneficial with up to 69% mortality reduction in women, and the ionising radiation dose is equivalent to a transatlantic flight. Therefore, Prof. Revel advocated for the implementation of lung cancer screening pilot programmes in EU Member States and for a trained workforce of radiologists with certification programmes. She underlined the past and future ESR/ERS statements on lung cancer screening and the actions to be undertaken at European Union level. Prof. Marie-Pierre Revel suggested that:

- the Council of the EU update the 2003 Council Recommendation on cancer screening to include lung cancer
- the European Commission develop lung cancer screening guidelines and include lung cancer in the scope of the Cancer Mission and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan
- the European Parliament raise awareness on this deadly disease by adopting a parliamentary resolution and encouraging the European Commission and Member States to act

Prof. Dr. Otto C. Burghuber, from the Department of Respiratory and Clinical Care Medicine in the Otto Wagner Hospital in Vienna and representing the European Respiratory Society, pointed out the overall increase in lung cancer cases in the European Union, and specifically in women. He highlighted that despite the survival rate being less than 5% at an advanced stage and having a high economic burden that increases along with the stage of cancer, only 5.6% of total cancer research is currently allocated to lung cancer. He emphasised the need for research on this disease to improve the rate of early diagnosis and screening, to improve characterisation of molecular and genetic profiles for personalised therapy and to find progress in lung cancer treatment, hence immunotherapy, chemotherapy and targeted drugs.

Ms Regine Deniel Ihlen, patient representative from Lung Cancer Europe (LuCE), shed some light on the difficulties lung cancer patients and survivors face. She highlighted that society tended to view lung cancer as a self-inflicted disease and to stigmatise patients, which has led to their isolation. She further outlined that patients needed psychological support, should have the right to be forgotten and that the patient perspective was often overlooked when talking about cancer. Therefore, she put forward the All.can survey which collects patient insights on cancer care and gives opportunities for improving efficiency.



Dr David R. Baldwin, consultant respiratory physician at Nottingham University Hospitals, Honorary Professor of Medicine at the University of Nottingham and speaking on behalf of the European Respiratory Society, stresses the median survival rate of 6 months for lung cancer compared to colorectal cancer that displays a more than 10-year survival rate for 57% of patients. He emphasised that lung cancer screening programmes should select the right people, ensure participation, have high standards in scanning processes, good management of indeterminate and incidental findings, and should make sure that clinical work-up is state-of-the-art and safe. In his view, the key to lung cancer outcomes are screening, awareness, early and rapid diagnosis, access to facilities and equipment, access to treatment, patient voice and active involvement, fiscal support, data, guidelines, standards and research. He stated that there should also be a simultaneous focus on smoking cessation, add-on health intervention, ensuring that patients received correct and good information as well as on the issue of resources. Lung cancer screening must be underpinned by new and better treatment and clinical excellence.



The ensuing lively discussion allowed stakeholders to ask questions and exchange views with the panel. **Mr Richard Price** and **Mr Mike Morrissey**, from the European Cancer Organisation, and **Prof. Regina Beets-Tan**, 2nd Vice President of the European Society of Radiology and appointed member of the Mission Board for Cancer, intervened. The issues raised included the way to ensure lung cancer is comprised in the Cancer Mission, the extent to which screening facilities going to people instead of the other way round was a key part of the strategy to encourage Member states to take up lung cancer screening, and the current scope of the cancer mission board and Horizon Europe missions.



The meeting ended with a wrap-up of key messages, presented by **MEP Claudia Gamon**, who further emphasised the need for advocacy towards national governments, to determine concrete measures and goals in a coordinated effort to ensure that lung cancer is put forward in the European Commission “Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan”.

The ESR would like to express its profound gratitude to Claudia Gamon, MEP, for hosting the event, and to thank all speakers and participants for their valuable contributions and unwavering support to raise public awareness of these important issues.