
Fight against cancer: European Economic and Social Committee, pandemic may cause “cancer tsunami”. Delays in diagnosis and treatment. Urgent action needed

The European plan for beating cancer must “be urgently and properly implemented”. The pandemic is taking a heavy toll on cancer detection and care, but Europe may face a “cancer tsunami” in the coming years. The warning comes today from the European Economic and Social Committee that has just held a meeting to take stock of the EU plan launched in February. Cancer is projected to become the leading cause of mortality in Europe in just under 15 years, and Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan is “a tremendous opportunity to turn the tide” against a disease which took some 1.3 million lives in Europe in 2020, a statement from the EESC reads. Based on an innovative approach, the European plan is ambitious and has great potential. But the “massive delays in cancer diagnosis and treatment reduce the chances of recovery”. It is therefore necessary to “effectively address” the Covid-induced disturbances. “Failure to act will create a snowball effect, leading to the accumulation of problems that could get out of hand in no time”. The EESC also highlights some critical aspects of the plan: for example, its reliance on “modern screening and treatment technologies” which raises concerns “about regional infrastructure disparities”. It is then crucial to work to “guarantee equal access to all groups in society, regardless of their social and economic status or vulnerability”.

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