

European roundtables 2021

Sustaining impact in a resource-constrained environment



Over 3 virtual roundtables, 29 CEOs and senior executives from 16 European countries discussed challenges and opportunities for the European cancer community following the COVID-19 crisis across the organisational, policy and research domains.



Strengths

Learning from differences

The diversity within the European cancer community present cancer leaders and CEOs with invaluable opportunities to strengthen their organisations through exposure to the different approaches and practices available in the region

Adaptability

Cancer organisations in the region demonstrated an incredible ability to adapt when faced with the operational and financial challenges brought by COVID-19, whether by re-focusing priorities, tapping into digital opportunities or embracing innovative models of delivery for their programmes

Mission-focus

Having a clear mission and purpose provides cancer organisations with an invaluable framework in times of uncertainty and disruption, as it can help guide strategic choices and assess acceptable levels of risks



Weaknesses

National outlook

Applying a too-narrow national focus may lead cancer societies to unnecessary duplications, as there is a lot that can be learnt by looking beyond one's borders, instead of each organisation reinventing the wheel

Collaboration gap

Stemming in part from differences in health systems, languages and strategic focus, collaboration between cancer organisations in Europe is not widespread, even though there are clear benefits from aligning agendas, coordinating work and pooling resources

Demonstrating impact

Cancer organisations must become better at articulating the impact of their work, both in health terms as well as in economic ones, and at framing their case for support as an investment opportunity for governments and philanthropists



Opportunities

Cancer policy landscape

With national cancer planning taking place in 90% of countries in Europe, the EU Beating Cancer Plan and a Cancer Mission under the EU's research programme, cancer policy appears to have grown in profile and interest across the region

Health top of the agenda

Health is now at the top of the agenda of all countries in Europe and the importance of well-functioning health systems has moved from being a concern only for healthcare communities, to becoming a priority across government, business, philanthropy and civil society

Culture of prevention

COVID-19 has put societies through a steep learning curve in how to prevent a disease and manage health risk factors, and we could yet emerge from the crisis with a more health-conscious population and a greater culture of prevention across other disease areas



Threats

Imbalanced research portfolio

Funding for cancer research is not evenly allocated, with most going to basic research, and very little towards implementation and prevention; while new discoveries are essential, research on how existing solutions can be applied at scale should not be overlooked

Complex health ecosystems

COVID-19 has accelerated a trend towards greater complexity in health ecosystems with the entrance of new players such as health start-ups, bio- and med-tech companies; while this carries potential to drive innovation, it also poses risks of disruption, fragmentation, and increased national competition

Cancer backlog

The impact on missed diagnoses due to the disruption of cancer services during the pandemic has been widely researched and it highlights the complex challenge for health systems in Europe to 'catch-up' while already working at full or near capacity