



The European Parliament in Brussels lit up in gold in support of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month!

The year 2020 is proving to be challenging as the world is confronted with an extraordinary global health emergency and everyone's attention is focused on one disease only: COVID-19. We must remember cancer has not gone away!

In this unprecedented year, CCI Europe (representing parents/patients), PanCare (a network of childhood cancer survivors and professionals working in this field) and SIOP Europe (paediatric cancer healthcare professionals and academia) joined forces in support of **Childhood Cancer Awareness Month** this September.

We extend our deep gratitude to Honourable Vice-President of the **European Parliament**, Ewa Kopacz, for championing the European Parliament endorsement of this September's '**Shine Gold**' Campaign. The lighting of the European Parliament building in Brussels (1-6 September) brings much needed visibility to the persistent burden of cancers affecting children and young people, and is an important signal that the youngest citizens will not be left behind. Our entire European childhood cancer community is delighted that this year's campaign has received such exceptional support.

Through the symbolic gesture of lighting the building in gold, the European Parliament is bringing it to the attention of all stakeholders and citizens that too many young lives are still lost to childhood cancer, but that the EU is well positioned to make transformational change possible.

This year's campaign aimed to reach out to a broad audience across Europe with accessible information on the stark reality of **childhood cancer – the number one cause of mortality in children** older than 1 year. The facts highlight the urgency:

- Every 15 minutes in Europe, a family receives the devastating news that their child has cancer.
- Over 6,000 children and young people are dying every year in Europe from childhood cancer. This equates to as many as 200 school buses.
- There are 35,000 new cases of childhood cancer in Europe each year. This equates to a football stadium at full capacity.
- Almost 500,000 long-term survivors of childhood cancer live in Europe

today. This equates to the population of a large European city, such as Antwerp (Belgium), Lyon (France), or Lisbon (Portugal).

- There are up to 20% differences in survival of children with cancer amongst European regions.
- Ten times less public funding is allocated to childhood cancer research in Europe than in the US. Europe should strengthen its position as a leader in childhood cancer research globally. More funding is urgently needed for childhood cancer research.

Children and young people should be able to benefit from faster and more efficient development of affordable innovative medicines. The cure rate must improve – indeed we must cure more and cure better, as detailed in our **Manifesto for the paediatric oncology and haematology community**.

Pamela Kearns (SIOP Europe President): *"Cancer hasn't stopped because of the Coronavirus. The sad reality is that COVID-19 has in fact had a devastating impact on research and clinical trials. The research of today produces the treatments of tomorrow, so it's really important to highlight the challenges that we are facing and urge all the various stakeholders to continue their work for a brighter future for children and adolescents with cancer."*

Samira Essiaf (SIOP Europe CEO): *"Together with a terrific team that is worth its weight in gold as well as our partners, we aim to make a difference across the EU and beyond for children and adolescents with cancer as well as for childhood cancer survivors. This year's September campaign was the first of its kind and we are determined to do more next year."*

We are also pleased that local Belgian media (newspapers, magazines and TV) have recognised the importance of this message and are featuring Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. These local media outlets so far include RTV, VRT, *Het Laatste Nieuws*, AVS Television, TV Bruzz, *Nieuwsblad*, *Gazet van Antwerpen*, *Knack*, and we are confident others will follow. Such positive reactions are promising, and we will continue to increase awareness of the needs of childhood cancer to enable a better future for these brave young people.

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SHINE GOLD ON OUR YOUNG HEROES & SURVIVORS!

SEPTEMBER
CHILDHOOD CANCER
AWARENESS MONTH

