



On the guest list?

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EU enlargement

Štefan Füle on the EU accession process in 2011, Enikő Győri on the Hungarian presidency's enlargement priorities

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Childhood Cancer Awareness Day:

SIOPE addresses burning issues at EU Parliament on February 9 and promotes FP7-funded project ENCCA

Despite the significant progress during the last forty years with a 80 per cent cure rate obtained with current treatments in Europe, childhood cancer is still the first cause of death by disease in children over the age of one year. The Awareness Day is a good time for SIOPE (European Society for Paediatric Oncology) to win MEPs to tackle childhood cancer across the EU. "February 9 is a milestone for SIOPE and our initiative ENCCA, a European Network for Cancer Research in Children and Adolescents. We will present topics which urgently need improvement: regulatory burdens on paediatric clinical trials, the need for rapidly licensed drugs, innovative therapies, plans to implement harmonised Europe-wide standards of care for patients and survivors and the need for funding", states Ruth Ladenstein, physician and scientist at the Children's Cancer Research Institute (CCRI) of the St. Anna Kinderkrebsforschung Association, Vienna, coordinator of the FP7-funded ENCCA project and SIOPE president.

The overall ENCCA aim is to improve cure and facilitate access to innovative therapies and standard care across Europe. The consortium comprises 33 partners from 13 EU-countries, including research institutes and organisations highly renowned in paediatric oncology. Vice-Chair is Gilles Vassal from Institut Gustave Roussy, France.

By integrating all relevant stakeholders, including ICCPO, International Confederation of Childhood Cancer Parent Organisations, the partners intend to unite informal Clinical Trials Groups in Paediatric and Adolescent Oncology and their affiliated research platforms to form a sustainable European Virtual Institute. The aim is to reduce knowledge fragmentation, improve clinical research and support the acceleration of developing innovative therapeutic strategies for the respective field. "We strive to promote innovative methodology and designs for clinical trials to address the specific needs of paediatric cancers. Another goal is to substantially improve the quality-of-life of our patients as long-term side effects of current treatments are a reality. Ethical issues related to the participation of our patients in clinical research are a further topic", explains Ladenstein. All the activities will mark a milestone that can facilitate trials on a European basis and foster the integration of European research tasks. Since cancers in children are rare, research has not been financially attractive to the pharmaceutical industry, explaining the dependency of research on private donations and competitive public funds. To achieve real success in this fight against paediatric cancers, however, sustainable funding must be ensured by strong partnerships between MEPs and political decision-makers, pharmaceutical companies and the academic community.



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