

JOINT POSITION STATEMENT

CANCER PREVENTION ACROSS EUROPE



Introduction

This paper provides a framework to help reduce the growing burden of cancer and close the inequalities in healthcare systems and will be adopted by cancer workforce organisations at the frontline of cancer care in Europe. The cancer workforce has a crucial role in supporting people to reduce their risk of developing cancer; to increase health and wellbeing; to address the multiple and varying needs of patients, communities, and the public; and to support the overall sustainability of healthcare systems. As stated in the [EU's Beating Cancer Plan](#), Europe urgently needs a renewed commitment to cancer prevention that recognises the growing challenges but also the opportunities to overcome them. Without action, the cancer mortality in Europe is expected to increase by more than 24% by 2035.

Cancer prevention is proven to be more effective than cure and the most cost-effective, long-term cancer control strategy. Cancer prevention can be improved dramatically by raising awareness and addressing the risk factors. With effective primary and secondary prevention, the risk of developing cancer is reduced, and the possibilities for early detection of cancer is improved by high attendance rates in screening programmes. Efficient tertiary prevention will reduce morbidity and disability in people diagnosed with and being treated for cancer.

The organisations included in the [PrEvCan cancer prevention campaign \(Cancer Prevention across Europe\)](#) commit to promoting preventive initiatives and to act as role models by supporting integrated, dynamic, personalised and evidence-based information and interventions in every aspect of cancer prevention. The 66 PrEvCan international and national partners are listed at <https://cancernurse.eu/prevcan/>

Organisations representing the cancer workforce have the potential to move towards more coordinated and harmonised cancer control efforts due to their national and international influence. The cancer prevention recommendations in the European Code Against Cancer (ECAC) are important calls to action and are based on the latest scientific evidence. Their aim is to support healthcare providers and other stakeholders in delivering the best possible evidence-based, reliable information on how to reduce the cancer risk to a wider proportion of the European population.

The four areas of recommendations are a synthesis of knowledge gathered from a rapid literature review, expert panel opinions and the Europe-wide PrEvCan campaign and research findings.

The recommendations include actions on all levels:

- i.) Policy
- ii.) Research
- iii.) Education
- iv.) Clinical practice.

They are interrelated and stress that a strong collaboration between all relevant stakeholders is crucial in advancing our understanding of cancer prevention and developing effective strategies to reduce the incidence and / or the number / impact of complications from cancer.

Key points from the PrEvCan campaign

- The PrEvCan campaign has reached out to the intended target groups through a large variety of activities, from local to national and/or international initiatives, covering all 12 recommendations included in the ECAC
- Cancer prevention literacy can be improved by positive communication on the benefits of lifestyle changes when delivered by trustworthy sources such as the cancer workforce
- The cancer workforce needs to take a more proactive approach in public health and primary/secondary/tertiary cancer prevention
- Cancer prevention education and interventions should be better integrated into education programmes, as today's students are tomorrow's healthcare professionals
- Cancer prevention communication needs to be inclusive and non-judgemental. Intimidating and condescending messages should be avoided
- Effective cancer prevention can positively impact socio-economic inequalities but needs to be approached carefully to avoid exposing already vulnerable groups
- Misconceptions related to cancer risk factors are common and need to be addressed with evidence-based, context-specific communication and support aimed at different target audiences

- Individual recommendations on cancer prevention should be combined with clear support structures, both on an individual and societal level. These structures may vary between both individuals and population
- The commitment to cancer prevention requested by the EU needs to include enhanced funding opportunities, promoting novel research and development.

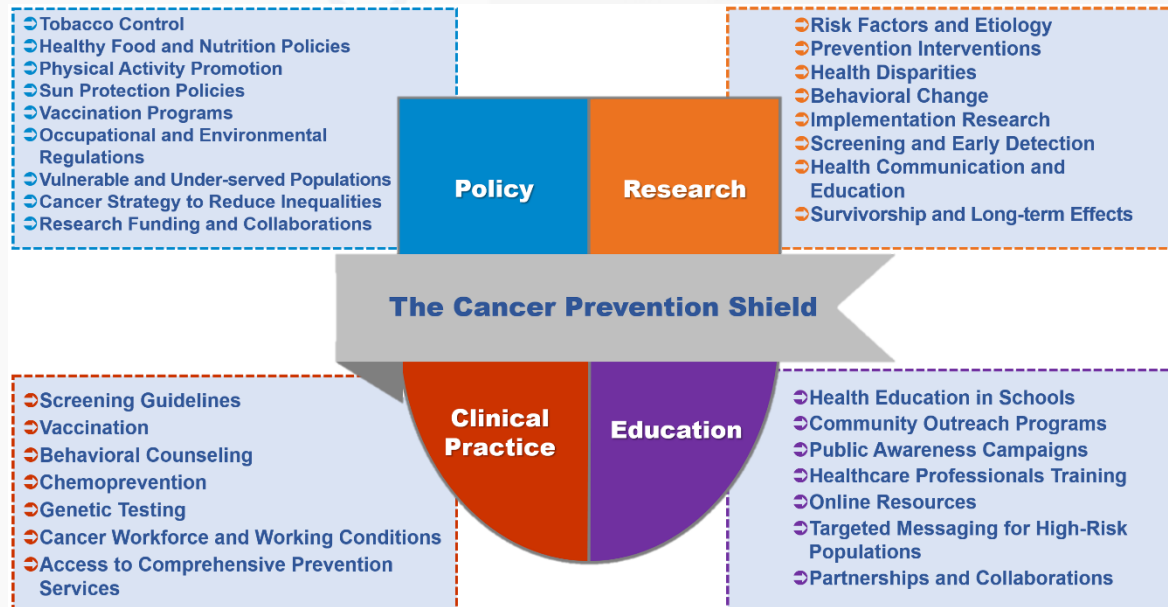


Figure 1. "The Cancer Prevention Shield": Scheme of the multidimensional recommendations for cancer prevention in Europe.

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