



## PRESS RELEASE

### ***europacolon* highlights 'Manifesto for life' in Houses of Parliament to improve care of colorectal cancer patients and lobby for urgent action**

London, 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2009 – The Houses of Parliament played host to the '**Manifesto for life**' UK launch event, lobbying MPs and calling for improvements in colorectal cancer screening across Europe.

The event was hosted by Sharon Hodgson MP, a keen supporter of colorectal cancer campaigns, in conjunction with *europacolon* and *Bowel Cancer UK* and featured a presentation on screening from Professor Robert Steele, expert in the field of surgery and molecular oncology.

Guests also took the opportunity to visit The INFLATABLE COLON. The INFLATABLE COLON is a unique educational tool and replica of the human colon, inside which one experiences every stage of the disease including protruding polyps.

'**Manifesto for life**' calls on each of the 27 EU Member States to fully and urgently implement EU Recommendations concerning colorectal cancer screening. '**Manifesto for life**' is aimed at key policymakers and other relevant stakeholders, who contribute to the development of EU cancer policies. The manifesto aims to gather over 1.5 million signatures from people across Europe, including colorectal cancer patients and their families

and carers, *europacolon* affiliates and other patient groups, as well as from MPs and MEPS. The aim is to encourage Parliament and European Parliament to take action to improve the diagnosis and treatment of colorectal cancer.

Jola Gore-Booth, Director of *europacolon*, comments "The rates of colorectal screening need to be vastly improved and we are delighted to have such an interest amongst MPs already. We welcome media to help raise awareness of the need for effective and more widespread screening to combat this terrible disease".

### **Colorectal cancer – a race against time**

Over 412,000 European citizens are diagnosed with colorectal cancer each year<sup>1</sup> and over half of those diagnosed with the disease will die, despite it being highly treatable if diagnosed early.

In December 2003, the European Code against Cancer and the EU Council developed recommendations, which specified that, "Men and women over 50 years of age should participate in colorectal cancer screening. This should be within programmes with built in quality assurance procedures".

Figures suggest that colorectal cancer deaths could be reduced by as much as 50% by the year 2020 if positive action is taken now.<sup>2</sup>

*europacolon's 'Manifesto for life'* aims to encourage action within each EU Member State that will raise awareness of colorectal cancer and prompt governments to implement policy changes that will increase diagnosis and reduce the number of deaths from the disease.

For further information about 'Manifesto for life' and about *europacolon* please visit [www.europacolon.com](http://www.europacolon.com).

This event held at the Houses of Parliament was supported by Sharon Hodgson MP and we thank her for her support of *europacolon*.

- Ends -

### **Editors Notes**

*europacolon* is an independent Not for Profit organisation founded in 2005. It is the first European organisation dedicated to colorectal cancer and it aims to unite patients, carers, healthcare professionals, politicians, the media and the public in the fight against the disease.

*europacolon's* mission is to reduce deaths and improve the quality of life and support for those affected by colorectal cancer in Europe.

Its aims and objectives are to:

- Prioritise and raise the profile of colorectal cancer
- Establish patient advocacy groups
- Create a colorectal cancer community
- Increase awareness of symptoms and prevention of the disease
- Campaign for screening and improved choice of treatments
- Encourage the improvement of European standards and equity of care through the development of National Cancer Plans

Since 2005 *europacolon* has established dedicated colorectal cancer organisations in: Portugal, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland Belgium, Hungary and Croatia. Associates in Great Britain, Finland and Austria. In 2009 Affiliates will be set up in France, Italy, Germany, Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Holland and Macedonia.

## **References**

1. Ferlay et al. Annals of Oncology 2006 18:581-592
2. Vogelaar I, van Ballegooijen M, Schrag D, Boer R, Winawer SJ, Habbema JD, Zauber AG. How much can current interventions reduce colorectal cancer mortality in the U.S.: mortality projections for scenarios of risk-factor modification, screening, and treatment. Cancer 2006 Aug 24;107(7):1624-33

**For further information, please contact:**

**Jola Gore-Booth [jola@europacoln.com](mailto:jola@europacoln.com) or**

**Julia Kennedy [julia@europacoln.com](mailto:julia@europacoln.com)**

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