

PRESS RELEASE

europacolon launches EU Manifesto calling for improved care of colorectal cancer patients

10:00am CET, Tuesday 17 March 2009

The European Parliament will today witness the launch of europacolon's '**Manifesto for Life**', which calls on each of the 27 EU Member States to fully and urgently implement 2003 EU Recommendations concerning colorectal cancer screening.

'**Manifesto for Life**' is aimed at key EU policymakers and other relevant stakeholders, who contribute to the development of EU cancer policies. The launch of the manifesto will set in motion a year-long series of activities aimed at gathering 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 new and returning MEPs. The aim is to encourage the European Parliament to take action to improve the diagnosis and treatment of colorectal cancer.

europacolon's '**Manifesto for Life**' calls for URGENT ACTION to:

- **Raise awareness of colorectal cancer to encourage understanding of the disease and improvements in care**
- **Extend population screening for colorectal cancer and promote use of the best screening methodologies**
- **Invest in evidence-based national cancer plans**

Over 412,000 European citizens are diagnosed with colorectal cancer each year¹ 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”.

To date **only** 12 EU Member States have made any progress with implementing screening programmes. This delay has resulted in the unnecessary loss of many lives, as the disease, which is the second most common cancer in Europe, has gone undiagnosed and so untreated. (WE HAVE A REF FOR THIS AND WILL SEND ON). Figures suggest that colorectal cancer deaths could be reduced by as much as 50% by the year 2020 if positive action is taken now.²

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.

This launch event held at the European Parliament in Brussels was supported by Robert Sturdy MEP and we thanks him for his continued support of europacolon

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

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SIGN UP NOW!
Your **ACTION** counts

www.europacolon.com