

STOP Cervical Cancer in Europe



The vast majority of cervical cancers can be prevented and yet, every year in Europe, 50,000 women develop cervical cancer and 25,000 women die from it. Effective, organised cervical cancer screening can prevent up to 80% of cervical cancers. In addition, vaccination against cervical cancer has the potential to further reduce cervical cancer rates and together with screening, make the elimination of cervical cancer in Europe a reality.

The European Code against Cancer states:

- All women from the age of 25 should participate in organised cervical cancer screening programmes that are in compliance with the European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening.

The Council of the European Union recommends that all Member States should:

- Offer evidence-based cervical cancer screening through a systematic population-based approach with quality assurance at all appropriate levels. [i.e. organised cancer screening programmes]
- Ensure that all people participating in a screening programme are fully informed about the benefits and risks [i.e. through effective public education campaigns].
- Ensure that adequate complementary diagnostic procedures, treatment, psychological support and after-care are provided for those with a positive screening test [i.e. through adequate healthcare infrastructure].

Cervical cancer could be greatly reduced in Europe, except for the fact that many women either do not have access to effective prevention programmes or have not been made aware of the importance of prevention and therefore do not access the services that are available to them.

This problem is much worse among lower socioeconomic groups, where a lack of awareness and competing priorities result in reduced attendance. In Eastern Europe, the problems are compounded because there is a lack of effective prevention programmes. As a result, women in these groups or countries experience a disproportionate share of cervical cancer cases and cervical cancer represents a clear example of health inequality within in the European Union.

The European Parliament Cervical Cancer Interest Group together with the European Cervical Cancer Association and numerous organisations from across Europe now call upon the European Parliament, the European Commission and the National Governments of Europe to:

- 1) Work diligently to implement effective population-based organised cervical cancer screening programmes together with professionally organised public health education programmes to ensure that all women understand the importance of cervical cancer prevention and take full advantage of the services that are available to them
- 2) Facilitate the exchange of best practice between Member States so that the world-class expertise that exists in some Member States can be applied uniformly across the European Union
- 3) Support independent population-based research to establish the most appropriate means for implementing the available new technologies within public health programmes and thereby ensure the most effective reductions in cervical cancer across the European Union.
- 4) Recognise and support the essential role played by charities, non-governmental organisations and volunteers in the ongoing reduction of cervical cancer in Europe.