



Press release (15.09.2015)

## Official ceremony: « 30 years of EU action against cancer »

*To mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first action on cancer by the European Union, a high level event entitled « 30 years of EU action against cancer », jointly organised by the European Commission and the Luxembourg Presidency, took place in Luxembourg on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015. The high level event offered the possibility to take stock of the numerous achievements and to discuss the way forward for EU action in the field of cancer.*

Cancer has been a priority issue for EU public health policy for 30 years.

In their sessions of June 1985 in Milan and December 1985 in Luxembourg, the Heads of State and Government of the twelve Member States of the European Community decided to launch the first “Europe Against Cancer” program, which became operational in 1987. This initiative introduced an important new dimension and created a closer link between Europe and the concerns of its citizens.

Thanking the Luxembourg Presidency for hosting the event, Vytenis Andriukaitis, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said : *“For three decades, European action on cancer has focused on prevention, screening and control. The prevention policies and access to early diagnosis are crucial. They can change one’s life. The 30 year anniversary is an opportunity for us all – the EU, national governments, and stakeholders to renew our shared commitment to make prevention, equality and quality of life a reality for all. The effectiveness of national and EU health policies needs to be checked and evaluated regularly. We must continue our work on cancer prevention at all social levels. Cancer is universal and we are all at risk.”*

Minister of Health Lydia Mutsch pointed out, *“Luxembourg was right from the start a strong supporter of common EU action in the field of health and particularly in the fight against cancer. This joint EU action and partnership approach can indeed help to avoid inefficient actions, duplication of efforts and will thus contribute to the better use of the limited resources available”.*



## Cancer remains a key public health concern

Cancer is the second most common cause of death in the European Union and this figure is expected to rise due to the ageing population.

In Luxembourg cancer is even the leading cause of death in men since 2010.

It is estimated that about 1/3 of cancers are avoidable by adopting healthier lifestyles and avoiding key risk factors. As Lydia Mutsch said, *“Luxembourg considers horizontal action on major health determinants a priority, in the same way than interministerial action programs and strategies in the field of nutrition and physical activities, tobacco control and alcohol”*.

Since 1992 Luxembourg runs a national screening program for breast cancer in women aged 50 to 69 years, following the European guidelines. Thanks to this program, early detection could be increased from 9 to around 70% of the target group.

## National Cancer Control Plan 2014-2018

In July 2014 the Luxembourg government adopted a comprehensive National Cancer Control Plan 2014-2018, containing 73 different actions and covering the areas of Governance, health promotion, prevention and early detection, diagnostic, treatment, supportive care and rehabilitation, health resources, patient rights and research.

The plan will be monitored and evaluated on the basis of the indicators developed by the EUROCHIP Project and the data collected by the National Cancer Registry launched in 2013.

In conjunction with of the official ceremony, a public awareness event with information stands from several health-related foundations and associations (Fondation Cancer, Fondation Kriibskrank Kanner, Europa Donna Luxembourg, Association luxembourgeoise des groupes sportifs oncologiques, EU Ex-smokers and the Ministry of Health) was organized at the Place d’Armes.

*Communiqué par le ministère de la Santé.*



THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG  
Ministry of Health



**Photos :** Légende

Lydia Mutsch, Minister for Health, Luxembourg  
Vytenis Andriukaitis, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety  
Dr Danielle Hansen-Koenig, Director, Directorate of Health

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