

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(88)239 final

Brussels, 16 May 1988

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
"EUROPE AGAINST CANCER" PROGRAMME
AS AT 31 MARCH 1988

(Communication of the Commission)

**Progress report on the implementation of the
Europe against Cancer programme as at 31 March 1988**

In June 1985, when the European Council in Milan supported the launching of the European campaign against cancer, the Heads of State and Government of the 12 Member States acted as pioneers, for the Community was thus impelled to intervene in a field which was in many respects new to it. The very fact of breaking new ground, the need to mobilize the many public and private bodies engaged in the fight against cancer combined with the slowness of Community decision-making procedures have meant that 1987, like 1986 was again devoted only to preparation. The result is that actual launching of the Europe against Cancer programme has been deferred until 1988.

**I. The three basic Council instruments: main difficulties encountered
in respect of their implementation or adoption**

Three basic Council instruments establish the legal and financial framework for this European programme against cancer. While the first concerning prevention and health education was adopted in mid-1986, the second dealing with research was not adopted until the end of 1987, while the third on arousing the interest of the public and the health professions had still not been adopted by the end of the first quarter of 1988.

- (a) The first instrument is the Resolution of 7 July on a programme of action of the European Communities against cancer (OJ C 184, 23 July 1986, pp 19-20). The Resolution contains the very general outline framework for Community action as regards prevention (tobacco, nutrition and alcohol, chemical substances, early diagnosis, epidemiological data) and health education.

It was adopted on the basis of proposals by the Commission (COM(85)628 final, 14 November 1985) which provided for the following allocation of resources in the first five years: 1986 - 650 000, 1987 - 1 million, 1988 - 1.4 million, 1989 - 1.55 million and in 1990 - 1.7 million. These amounts proved inadequate in 1987, which added to the difficulty of the Commission's task. The experience of the first quarter in 1988 has still further accentuated these difficulties.

- (b) The Council Decision of 7.XI.87 on the coordination of the programme of research in medicine and health (1987-91) *
This Decision allocates 65 million ECU over five years to the entire programme, including a suggested allocation of 18 million ECU for the coordination of medical research on cancer.

Due to the delay in adopting this Decision, the implementation of most of the research projects planned for 1987 has been delayed which led to undoubted difficulties for research teams, especially the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC).

- (c) The third basic instrument, which supplements the first two, is concerned with arousing the interest of the public and the health professions in 1988, and especially in 1989, which was declared the European Information on Cancer Year by the European Council held in London in December 1986.

This draft Council Decision (COM(86)717 final of 17 December 1986) was forwarded to the other Community institutions by the Commission at the end of 1986 and published in the Official Journal (C 50 of 26 February 1987, pp 56-58). It had still not been adopted by 31 March 1988.

However, the Council should be able to adopt a position in May 1988 on the basis of opinions delivered in February 1987 by the Economic and Social Committee and, in February 1988, by Parliament. An agreement of principle was reached on the basis of the proposal at the Council meeting of the Ministers of Health on 15 May 1987. Only the size of the allocation for this information and awareness campaign remains to be determined. In May 1987, the Belgian Presidency proposed a compromise allocation of 10 million ECU for the years 1988-89.

Clearly, the lack of a decision, further complicated by the delay in the adoption of the general budget of the Community for 1988, has impeded the launching of the campaign to increase the awareness of the public and the health professions. Many activities originally planned for the European Week against Cancer (1-8 May 1988) cannot be carried out for lack of Community financing. The main parties concerned (cancer prevention associations and leagues, anti-smoking committees, general practitioners associations, etc.) have shown understanding while not concealing their disappointment.

* OJ L334 of 24.XI.87 p. 20-25

II. 1987-89 action plan of the Commission

On the basis of these three basic Council instruments, which outline the general area of action and establish the budgetary resources available, the Commission drew up, in the autumn of 1986, a specific detailed action plan containing 75 points. For practical reasons and for the sake of more specific wording, the period to be covered was limited to three years, 1987-1989. Needless to say, the Europe against Cancer programme will unfortunately not be completed in 1989, since the fight against cancer will of necessity require a very long-term effort at every level, national and Community.

In January 1987, the three-year action plan was forwarded for information purposes to the three other Community institutions: the Council, Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, and to various Commission Committees and Working Parties, namely the committee of cancer specialists, the committee on medical research management, group of associations and leagues against cancer, anti-smoking associations, etc. It was even more widely disseminated, for it was published in full in the Official Journal (OJ C 50, 26 February 1987, pp 1-55).

Subsequent developments were limited to an overall presentation of the implementation of the Europe against Cancer programme in 1987. A detailed analysis of each of the 75 points in the Commission action plan can be obtained from the Europe against Cancer unit, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Education.

(a) Cancer prevention

With regard to cancer prevention, top priority was given to the anti-smoking campaign. Between July 1987 and January 1988 the Commission forwarded to the Council proposals for Directives in accordance with the action plan, on the subject of tobacco taxation, labelling tobacco products and maximum tar content of cigarettes.

These three proposals fall within the scope of the completion of the internal market by 1992. In each case, the highest level of consumer protection was aimed at:

- approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco, using as a basis the arithmetic average of existing duties. This would lead to substantial increases in taxes and the sale prices of cigarettes in at least nine of the twelve Member States.
- harmonisation of labelling of tobacco products in line with Irish legislation which is the most advanced in this field.

- harmonization of national provisions regarding the maximum authorized tar content of cigarettes by lowering it to 15 mg in 1992, in conformity with Spanish legislation, and to 12 mg in 1995 in line with the recommendations of the Commission's committee of cancer experts.

Appreciable progress has likewise been made in the prevention of occupational cancers. On 3 August 1987, the Council confirmed a proposal for the classification of 29 carcinogenic substances, bringing to 56 the number of substances so classified since 1986. Furthermore, the Commission put before the Council in the autumn of 1987 a new proposal for a Directive on the protection of workers against 23 carcinogenic substances and eight carcinogenic processes.

Finally, other actions and studies relevant to the ECSC industries have been carried out.

On the other hand, lack of staff and inadequate budget resources resulted in little being done in 1987 as regards the improvement of foodstuffs, of systematic screening and early detection. In particular, it proved possible to finance only a small number of studies and operations. The proposals submitted after September 1987 had to be deferred until the following budget year. And the financial situation looks even more difficult in 1988: some 40 proposals for studies and operations will have to be scrutinized by the committee of cancer experts at their seventh meeting scheduled to be held in Bonn on 3 and 4 May 1988.

The total volume of applications for Community aid for this first instalment already amounts to 3.6 million ECU, and it is to be expected that total requirements for the second will be at least as large. Obviously, the 1.4 million ECU normally provided under the Council Resolution of July 1986 to finance cancer prevention and health education operations will be insufficient to meet all the applications deemed recommendable on scientific grounds by the committee of cancer experts.

- (b) Health education, arousing the interest of the public and of the health professions

In the health education field, top priority was given to the finalizing of the "European Code against Cancer". Drawn up by the committee of cancer experts on the basis of the most recent findings of epidemiological research, these ten rules were the subject of intensive consultations among senior national health officials and anti-cancer organizations. In all, it took close to a year and 200 hours of work by experts to finalize the Code, which is now accepted by all those, whether public or private, involved in the fight against cancer in the Community. The Code was officially handed to the twelve Heads of State and Government at the European Council held in Copenhagen in December 1987.

At the same time the Commission was able to initiate and finance work preparatory to the drawing up of three television health education programmes:

- "Lifestyles and cancer in Europe". This 40-minute film, shot in several regions of the Community, shows the link between lifestyles and certain types of cancer. Of a high scientific standard, this film enables several of Europe's leading specialists to express their opinions.
- "Mankind and cancer". Recorded in the same studio by all the participating television networks on the basis of a joint but culturally adaptable scenario, this 30-minute programme illustrates, with the help of huge models of human cells, how cancer appears and how we can increase our chances of avoiding it thanks to the ten rules of the European Code against Cancer.
- "Euro Jim versus Crab Cancer". This cartoon film in five one-and-a-half-hour episodes brings home to children between the ages of 7 and fourteen the five European rules on tobacco, alcohol, exposure to the sun, overweight, and fruit and vegetables.

1987 and the first quarter of 1988 were a period of intensive preparation for the 1988-89 campaign to arouse the interest of the public and the health professions in the fight against cancer. A very large number of meetings were needed not only to inform the public and private bodies involved in the fight against cancer, but also - in many cases - to overcome their scepticism as to the usefulness of a European campaign:

- Three meetings with producers of television medical programmes were needed in order to convince at least one major network per country to screen the Euro Jim cartoon film and at least one of the two programmes for adults during the European week against cancer (1-8 May 1988);
- Four meetings involving all the anti-cancer organizations were needed to convince these vital bodies that the Commission could make a specific contribution to the fight against cancer in Europe, not only by making it possible to draw up the European Code against Cancer, but also because it had drawn up a series of proposals for Directives essential to an effective campaign against smoking and occupational cancers.

A very large number of proposals for operations relating to the European week against cancer were submitted to the Commission by these anti-cancer organizations. However, the budget problems which marked the beginning of 1988 made it possible to finance only a very few of them.

The Community contribution amounts to less than 10% of the total expenditure committed by these organizations at the Commission's urging.

- A meeting with the group representing general practitioners was used to inform and mobilize this branch of the medical profession which has a vital part to play in acquainting its patients with the European Code and in implementing a policy of systematic screening and early detection of cancer. In several Member States the Code will be posted in doctors' waiting rooms, at least during the European week against cancer.
- Two meetings with senior health education officials obtained the collaboration of national Ministries of Health and of Education in promoting the European Code against Cancer among teachers and pupils during the European Information on Cancer Year in 1989.

Finally, the working groups on the training of doctors, nurses and dentists have met several times in order to draft recommendations to be submitted to the three competent consultative Committees on the training of health personnel.

(c) Cancer research

The belated adoption by the Council of the medical research coordination programme shifted into 1988 the main part of the operations originally announced by the Commission in its action plan.

Of the fifty Community grants intended to promote the mobility of cancer researchers in 1987, only fifteen could be allocated - by recourse to an alternative form of Community financing.

Exceptional procedures had to be invoked in order to honour the commitments made to the EORTC as regards increased European coordination of monitoring of therapeutic tests.

Other actions have also been carried out in 1987 :

- a pilot study on the role of nutritional factors in pre-cancerous lesions of the stomach was initiated as part of the EURONUT project;
- on 30 November and 1 December 1987 a seminar was held on "Passive smoking and health". On this basis, concerted action proposals will be submitted to the European Commission at the beginning of 1988;
- a report was established in the framework of the EUROCAT concerted actions to evaluate the impact of the Chernobyl accident on the frequency of observed chromosome aberrations in 18 European centres. This report has yet to be examined by a group of experts in 1988 before being finalised.

Finally, the cancer research working party met twice since the adoption in November 1987 of the medical research coordination programme to lay down procedures for the selection of applicants for grants and of proposals for cancer research.

III. Conclusions

Serious difficulties were encountered in 1987 and at the beginning of 1988 as regards implementation of the Europe against Cancer programme because of the delay in adopting the two Council Decisions on cancer research and on arousing the interest of the public and of the health professions in the fight against cancer. Furthermore, the Commission was faced with a lack of staff and a considerable shortfall in the appropriations needed to meet the expectations of the numerous European bodies which submitted proposals for studies or operations in the field of cancer prevention and health education.

However, these difficulties do not outweigh the success recorded by the Europe against Cancer programme, which has now established its credibility in the eyes of the main anti-cancer bodies throughout the Community.

EUROPE AGAINST CANCER PROGRAMME

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ACTION PLAN 1987-89
ON 31 MARCH 1988
(OI.CSO.28.2.1987. pp. 1-55)

Commission departments working paper

I. CANCER PREVENTION

I.1 CAMPAIGN AGAINST TOBACCO

Proposed action 1: Upwards alignment of taxation on tobacco manufactured in the European Community

On 7 August 1987 in the context of completing the internal market, the Commission presented a number of proposals on the approximation of the rates and harmonization of indirect tax structures, particularly two proposals for directives on the approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco. The first concerns taxes on cigarettes (COM(87)325) and the second the approximation of taxes on manufactured tobacco other than cigarettes. The arithmetic average of existing rates was used as the basis for the Commission's calculations, in line with the principle of upwards alignment.

With respect to cigarettes, the proposal would result in an increase in the existing tax burden of about 30% in the Community as a whole. In at least nine of the twelve Member States taxes and prices would go up sharply, in some cases up to over 150% by 1992 in some countries.

With respect to other tobacco products (cigars, cigarillos, smoking tobacco, snuff and chewing tobacco) increases in taxes and prices would as a rule take place in countries where consumption is highest.

Proposed action 2: Financing of preventive activities at national level by the use of increased fiscal measures on tobacco

Proposals to this end should be drawn up in 1988 based on a comparative study of procedures and costs of national protection policies and after consultation with the Committee of cancer experts of the Commission.

Action 3: Publication of indices excluding tobacco by the Statistical Office of the European Communities

Since July 1987, the Statistical Office of the European Communities has published monthly indices of prices excluding tobacco prices for each of the twelve Member States.

Proposed action 4: Harmonization of cigarette labelling in the European Community

In January 1988 in connection with completing the internal market, the Commission put before the Council a proposal for a directive (COM(87)719 final) requesting that before the end of 1992:

- all packaging for tobacco products should carry the warning "Smoking can damage your health"
- in addition to this general warning on all cigarette packets, a different message should be printed on each side of the packet to be selected from a list which must contain the two following warnings: "Smoking causes cancer"; "Smoking causes heart disease" as well as the tar and nicotine content of cigarettes.

Proposed action 5: Prohibition of cigarettes with a high tar content

In January 1988 in the context of completing the internal market the Commission forwarded to the Council a proposal for a Council Directive (COM(87)720 final) which seeks to ban cigarettes with a tar yield of more than 15 mg by 1992, and of 12 mg by 1993.

Proposed action 6: Harmonization of the standards for the components of tobacco smoke

The measuring methods used are ISO 4387 and ISO 3400 standards or any other equivalent method.

Proposed action 7: Prohibition of tax free sales of tobacco in the European Community. Planned for 1988.

Proposed action 8: Protection of children from tobacco sales. Planned for 1988.

Proposed action 9: Reorientation of tobacco production towards less toxic varieties and study of the possibilities of reconversion

The Commission has continued to act on the price guarantees to tobacco producers and on the premiums paid to Community tobacco buyers. Further, in connection with the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes 1987-91 for Greece, about 15% of tobacco growing areas will be converted to other production.

Proposed action 10: Information and public awareness campaign in the struggle against tobacco

Dissemination of the European Code against cancer and its first rule "Do not smoke" began at the end of 1987 through a number of cancer prevention organizations. This effort will be pursued and carried on in-depth, particularly by means of the European network of national anti-smoking organizations to be set up in 1988.

Proposed action 11: Study of national provisions and development of Community regulations on tobacco smoking in public places. Proposal planned for 1988.

Proposed action 12: Study of national provisions and development of proposed Community regulations on the limitation of tobacco publicity. Proposal planned for 1988.

Action 13: Comparative analysis of anti-smoking campaigns

A pilot study should be completed in 1988 and presented to a joint symposium WHO/Commission on the campaign against smoking to be held in Madrid on 7-11 November 1988.

Action 14: Information exchange on the struggle against smoking

This exchange of information and experience began in 1987 and will be intensified in 1988 through the establishment of a European network of national anti-smoking organizations.

I.B. IMPROVEMENT IN NUTRITION

Action 15: Analysis of existing information on nutrition and cancer

Two studies on alcohol and cancer and food and cancer will be available early in 1988. Several in-depth studies will be initiated in 1988.

Action 16: Development of nutritional recommendations against cancer adapted to each of the categories of participants concerned

Dissemination of the European Code against cancer began in 1987 and will be continued in 1988. The rules concerning nutrition (alcohol, fibre content, fruit and vegetables, obesity and fats) was supplemented by appropriate comments drafted by local participants in the fight against cancer: associations and leagues against cancer, organizations representing general practitioners etc.

Proposed action 17: Harmonization of nutritional labelling of foodstuffs in the European Communities. Proposal planned for 1988.

Proposed action 18: Consumer protection against certain agents in foodstuffs

Regular monitoring of these issues by the competent expert committees was carried out in 1987 and will be continued in 1988.

Action 19: Improvement of existing information campaigns concerning nutrition

In 1988 widespread dissemination of the European Code against cancer should ensure that Europeans are better informed about nutrition and cancer.

Action 20: Initiation of information campaigns for recommended foodstuffs.

See Action 19.

Proposed action 21: Promotion of appropriate foodstuffs and techniques.

Preparatory studies will be made of these questions.

Action 22: Evaluation of pilot experiments in nutrition.

A study will be initiated in 1988

Action 23: Exchange of information on nutrition and cancer.

Dissemination of European studies and work on this area will be initiated in 1988.

I.C. PROTECTION AGAINST CARCINOGENIC AGENTS

Proposed action 24: Protection against ionizing radiation and follow-up to Chernobyl

On 14 December 1987 the Council adopted the Euratom Regulation laying down maximum permitted levels of radioactive contamination of foodstuffs and of feedingstuffs following a nuclear accident or any other case of radiological emergency (OJ L 371, 30.12.87, pp. 11-13) and a Council Regulation on the conditions governing imports of agricultural products originating in third countries following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station (OJ L 371, 30.12.1987, pp. 14-19).

Action 25: Creation of an observation antenna and establishment of a list of chemical substances suspected of being carcinogenic
For lack of staff the antenna could not be set up in 1987.

Action 26: Speeding up of the work at Community level, and creation of a special group on classification and labelling of carcinogenic substances

In 1987 a working party on carcinogenic substances was set up under the Committee dealing with the classification and labelling of dangerous substances set up under Directive 87/548/EEC. This working party has examined the carcinogenic aspect of several suspect substances.

It has produced a proposal for the classification of 29 carcinogenic substances which was adopted by the Council on 3 August 1987, only 58% of the target announced in the Commission action plan (OJ C 50 of 26 February 1987) of 50 evaluations per year was achieved for lack of staff.

With the substances classified in 1988 the list now includes 56 carcinogenic substances.

Proposed action 27: Adoption of directives currently being discussed within the Council for the protection of workers (naphthylamine, aminodiphenyl, nitrodiphenyl and benzidine; benzene)

On 9 March 1988 in connection with the new procedure provided under Article 118A of the Single European Act, the European Parliament approved the joint position of the Council in this area. Adoption is planned for 1988.

Proposed action 28: New directives for the protection of workers against carcinogenic substances

On 7 December 1987, the Commission forwarded to the Council a proposal for a directive to reinforce the protection of workers against 31 carcinogenic agents and 8 industrial processes (COM(87)841).

Proposed action 29: Prevention of occupational cancers by improving the practical organization in undertakings, including information to employers and workers.

See p 4 bis

Proposed action 30: New measures for public protection against carcinogenic substances

On 28 January 1988 the Commission approved and forwarded to the Council a proposal amending Directive 76/769/EEC relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations. The proposal seeks to ban the marketing of the following carcinogenic substances: 2-naphthylamine and its salts; benzidine and its salts; 4-aminodiphenyl and its salts; 4-nitrodiphenyl; benzene.

I.D. SYSTEMATIC SCREENING AND EARLY DIAGNOSIS

Action 31: Promotion of a policy for systematic screening and early diagnosis of cancer of the uterine cervix and cancer of the breast

A working party will be set up in 1988. It can base its work on a number of studies and projects to be undertaken in 1988.

Action 32: Evaluation and improvement of the policy for the systematic screening and early diagnosis of other common cancers

The effectiveness from the public health standpoint of the faecal occult blood test for the screening of cancer of the colon and rectum was discussed on several occasions by the Committee of cancer experts and by its "Prevention" sub-committee. It is recommended that, for the time being, no new policy of systematic screening in this area be pursued, pending the results of an evaluation study of the German experience to be carried out in 1988.

I.D. "EUROPEAN CODE AGAINST CANCER"

Action 33: Transformation into layman's language of the European Code against cancer

The European Code was adopted by the Committee of European cancer experts in May 1987 after extensive consultation with senior officials responsible for health and associations and leagues against cancer. Each institution involved at the local level was asked to add to these rules suitable comments to adapt them to the different publics for which they are intended in each country.

II. INFORMATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION IN THE PREVENTION OF CANCER

II.B. INFORMING THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Action 34: Establishment of a directory of private organizations against cancer in Europe

The directory is now available in French, English and German.

Action 35: Comparative survey of private and public cancer prevention information campaigns

An initial survey concerning Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece is available in French. Further surveys should see completion in 1988.

Action 36: Bringing cancer prevention and the "Europe against cancer" programme to the attention of the media

A network of 11 public relations agencies were selected following a call for tenders to ensure information on and coverage of the "Europe against cancer" programme in each of the Twelve. These information campaigns, adapted to the cultural specificities of each Member State, have improved the visibility of the "Europe against cancer" programme in 1987. A survey carried out in November 1987 shows that 36.8% of Europeans were aware of its existence, though national figures vary considerably: United Kingdom (19%), Ireland (22%), Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands (25%) are far below the Community average, whereas Portugal, Italy and Luxembourg topped the list with 58% of people informed.

Proposed action 29: Prevention of occupational cancers by improving the practical organization in undertakings, including information to employers and workers

The proposal for a Council Directive concerning measures to improve safety and health of workers at their place of work (COM(87)73 final) transmitted by the Commission in March 1988 obliges employers to evaluate the risks to safety and health of workers including those caused by chemical substances and products, to identify appropriate protective measures and to make this information available to workers or their representatives charged specifically with the protection of health and safety at work.

Action 37: Eurobarometer survey of European's attitudes to cancer and its prevention

The results of this survey are available in all Community languages. They were widely disseminated and given extensive press coverage thanks to the decentralized coordinated press conferences which were organized in the various press and information offices of the European Communities on 6 and 7 October 1987.

Action 38: Financial contribution to television cancer prevention broadcasts for the general public

Three health education television programmes for the general public, based on the "European Code against cancer", were planned in 1987 and implemented between January and April 1988 for broadcast during the "European Week against Cancer" from 1 to 8 May 1988 ("Life-styles and cancer in Europe", a 40-minute film; "Man and cancer", a 30-minute studio programme, and "Euro-Jim against Crab-cancer", a series of five 90-second cartoons).

Action 39: Dissemination of the "European Code against cancer" at sports and cultural events sponsored by the European Community

All the publications issued by the Commission's press and information offices printed the European Code in full in one or several issues, particularly following the twelve press conferences held on 6 and 7 October 1987. Furthermore, the special concerts given in 1987 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome were organized to aid the cause of fight against cancer, and the money collected (around 100 000 ECU) was donated to the EORTC (European Organization for Research on Treatment of Cancer).

From early 1988 the dissemination of the European Code was stepped up.

Action 40: Public meeting to mark the end of the first year of the "Europe against Cancer" programme

On the occasion of the European Council meeting held in Copenhagen, during a short ceremony, a special version of the "European Code against cancer" was presented to the President-in-office of the Council. Each Head of State and Government received a similar copy of the European Code, in his/her language.

Action 41: Preparation of the action to be carried out in 1989, "European Information on Cancer Year"

The second half of 1987 saw the beginning of intensive preparation work for the European Week against Cancer from 1 to 8 May 1988. This week represents a test of coordinated effort to inform the public on a European scale with a view to preparing for 1989, "European Information on Cancer Year".

Proposed Action 42: Organization of a European Week against Cancer which will serve as a test for the 1989 campaign for the European Information on Cancer Year

This week will run from 1 to 8 May 1988 in each of the Twelve. Spurred by the Commission of the European Communities, almost all national and regional institutions involved in the fight against cancer have responded with enthusiasm. The budgetary problems of early 1988 have prevented the European Communities from meeting the legitimate requests for co-financing put forward in the context of the actions envisaged.

held in Bonn on 3 and 4 May 1988. This wealth of research work should be published late in 1988.

Proposed Action 52: Formulation of proposals for improving the organization of medical studies in the field of cancer

The recommendations formulated in 1986 by the Committee of European cancer experts have been initially examined by the various advisory committees on training for health care workers. These should express their opinion before the end of 1988, based on the conclusions reached by the working parties mentioned above.

Action 53: Stimulation of mobility of medical and nursing students

In 1988 the contribution of COMETT and ERASMUS grants to the mobility of medical students and student nurses will be assessed.

Proposed Action 54: Joint preparation of teaching materials and testing of these in faculties of medicine during the European Information on Cancer Year

An evaluation study of existing teaching materials, available in French, will form the basis of this action, to be planned in 1988.

Action 55: Exchange of experience on continuous training

This subject was examined in detail by the Working Party on cancer training for doctors jointly set up by the Committee of cancer experts and the Advisory Committee on Medical Training. Its work will continue in 1988 with a view to financing a certain number of projects to serve by way of example.

Proposed Action 56: Development of common computer programmes for expert medical systems for cancer

The working party referred to above started work on this issue in 1987. During its meetings, demonstrations of expert systems, aimed at facilitating the diagnosis of breast cancers and cancers of the uterine cervix, were given. Specific follow-ups might be envisaged from 1988 onwards.

Some of them had to be postponed; most of the authorities involved, however, showed understanding and agreed to continue to support their projects, even though the Commission's financial contribution was only a nominal one. Such a situation should obviously be avoided in the future, for it would undermine the Commission's credibility and induce apathy among the authorities concerned.

Proposed Action 43: Stepping-up in 1988 of the campaigns carried out in 1987 to inform the public and increase public awareness of the campaign against cancer
Implementation in 1988.

Proposed Action 44: Interesting teachers and the health professions in dissemination of the European cancer prevention commandments in the context of the "European Information on Cancer Year"
Implementation in 1988.

Proposed Action 45: Organization in 1989 of media campaign aimed at the general public: "12 nations, 12 days of action against cancer"
Implementation in 1989.

Proposed Action 46: Intensification in 1989 of the campaigns carried out in 1987 and 1988 to inform the public and increase public awareness of the fight against cancer
Implementation in 1989.

II.C. HEALTH EDUCATION

Action 47: Establishment of a comparative survey of health education programmes in European schools
Implementation in 1988.

Proposed Action 48: Drawing-up of proposals to improve health education programmes in European schools
Implementation in 1988 or 1989.

Proposed Action 49: Provision of teaching material relating to health education
The following audio-visual materials have been distributed free of charge to various local institutions concerned with the fight against cancer for dissemination during and after the European Week against Cancer: 1 200 sets of videocassettes containing the three television programmes mentioned above, 300 000 copies of a brochure aimed at the general public and illustrating the programme, 3 000 copies of a set of six posters, five of which are charts illustrating cancer mortality in the Twelve, accompanied by the European Code against Cancer.

Proposed Action 50: Contribution to the financing of television health education broadcasts on the prevention and treatment of cancer
Initiated in 1988 and stepped-up in 1989

III. TRAINING OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Action 51: Comparative study of the systems of university training for health care workers
The comparative studies started in 1986 provided material for numerous and productive meetings of working parties which have been set up to draft the recommendation to be put before the advisory committees on medical training (doctors, nurses and dentists). Such studies have also resulted in the organization of a large European conference on basic medical studies to be

IV RESEARCH

As the fourth medical and health research coordination programme (1987-1991) was only adopted by the Council on 17 November 1987, the Working Party on Cancer Research was able to meet only once in November 1987.

Action 57: European grants to encourage mobility of cancer research workers

The equivalent of 50 full-time grants are provided for in the fourth research coordination programme. The Working Party on Cancer Research has defined a procedure for the selection of applicants and a draft opinion has been prepared by the secretariat. In 1987 fifteen grants were awarded within the framework of the "Stimulation" programme.

Action 58: Comparison of existing cancer registers and recommendations for their minimum contents and conditions of access to them

A questionnaire (IARC - Dr. C. Muir) was sent in 1986 to every cancer register in the Member States with a view to carrying out a comparative analysis. The relevant data have been assembled and analysed and a report is available (V-87022-EN).

A "comparative study on the experience of the different Community countries and trade unions with occupational cancer registers" is under way. A report should be available in April 1988. Depending on the results of these two studies, a feasibility study on the development of a "European network of cancer registers" is planned.

Action 59: Launching European coordination of medical research on food and cancer

This action, which is partially under way within the framework of the Joint EURONET-ECP (European Organization for Cooperation in Cancer Prevention Studies) project, has seen the launching of a pilot study on the role of dietary factors in the development of atrophic gastritis, a pre-cancerous stomach lesion. A meeting of experts on stomach cancer will be held in Brussels early in 1988.

Action 60: Stepping-up of European research on occupational cancers

The European Coal and Steel Community's fifth medical research programme (1988-1992) has been approved by the European Commission. The ECSC Consultative Committee has delivered a favourable opinion. This research programme is due to begin in mid-1988 once the Council has given its assent in May. Research will concentrate in particular on lung cancer-causing agents in ECSC industries.

14

The continuation of the research under way, in the context of the 1986-1990 research programme on the environment, into the long-term carcinogenicity of asbestos fibres modified by a series of physico-chemical treatments should enable predictions to be made on the level of carcinogenic risk involved. Work is also under way on an evaluation of the relation between the surface characteristics of these fibres and their carcinogenic potential.

A seminar was held in Paris in December 1987 on methodologies for evaluating the links between occupational exposure and the risk of developing cancer. A workshop will be organized in 1988 to prepare a joint action on this subject within the framework of the fourth medical and health research programme (1987-1991).

Action 61: Continuation of the cofinancing by the European Community of research on the prevention of radiation-induced cancers

A revision of the radiation protection programme has been proposed to the Council. To prepare its implementation in 1988 and 1989, a feasibility study is under way which will propose a European population to be monitored for an increased incidence of cancers as a result of the Chernobyl accident.

Action 62: Continuation of cofinancing by the European Community of research on carcinogenic factors in the environment

Four joint projects are under way in different areas within the framework of the fourth environmental research programme (1986-1990):

1. Mechanism of mutagenesis
2. Quantitative mutagenesis (molecular dosimetry)
3. Development and validation of predictive tests for chromosome non-disjunction
4. Development and validation of tests for the detection of carcinogenic or genotoxic (epigenetic) substances.

These projects are being carried out by 16 research institutes in the Community.

Action 63: Launching of European coordination of medical research on cancer and reproduction

In 1987 a report aimed at estimating the impact of the Chernobyl accident on the rate of incidence of chromosome anomalies in 18 European centres was drawn up within the context of the EUROCAT joint project. Before being finalized this report will be examined by a group of experts at the beginning of 1988.

Action 64: Launching of European coordination of medical research on passive smoking

A seminar on "Passive smoking and health" was held from 30 November to 1 December 1987. On the basis of the participant's recommendations a proposal for a joint project on the effects of passive smoking on health will be prepared and submitted to the European Commission for examination.

Action 65: Continuation of European coordination of medical research on automated tissue analysis

The first series of activities relate to automated cytology. The joint project under way is aimed at obtaining comparable results for different apparatuses and methods of automated detection, in particular of cancers of the uterus. Analogous systems for the detection of other types of cancer are also being studied. A new joint project is in preparation.

The second series of activities relate to the automated analysis of chromosomes and facilitate discussion of the possibilities for standardization and performance criteria for cytogenetic techniques.

Action 66: Continued European coordination of research on imaging in medicine

An action on the identification and characterization of biological tissue by NMR is already under way. The Commission in 1987 funded the organization of a number of meetings of experts which, inter alia, led to the publication of the results of the experiments carried out on the measurement of the NMR relaxation properties of tissues in vitro and in vivo. Work on the development of tests and equipment for the calibration of these measurements and the evaluation of safety standards for NMR exposure in clinic applications will be pursued within the framework of the fourth medical and health research programme (1987-1991).

The Commission plans to finance during 1988 a seminar on clinical applications of positron emission tomography. A joint project of research in this area is in preparation, again within the framework of the fourth medical and health research programme.

Action 67: Strengthening of European coordination of medical research on control of multicentre therapeutic trials

Under the fourth medical and health research programme support for the ECRTC data centre is to be reinforced, notably through the improvement of the Eurocode informatics network, which facilitates direct communication between oncologists and their participation in the ECRTC's clinical trials.

15

Action 68: Cofinancing of a European network of data banks for hybridomas (cells producing monoclonal antibodies)

The Community co-financed from November 1985 to November 1987 the first two years of the European centre of the hybridoma and immunoclonal data bank of the CODATA (the International Council of Scientific Unions' Committee on Data for Science and Technology). CODATA relies on three centres located in Europe (Centre de R&D en Immunoclones in the Faculty of Medicine in Nice), the United States (American Type Culture Collection, Rockville, Md.) and Japan (Tokyo). The data collected by each centre are made available to all three.

It is possible that the present European centre will extend its dissemination/collection/publicization activities through other forms of European collaboration, in particular electronic networks.

Action 69: Cofinancing by European Community of research into genetic engineering and protein engineering for the manufacture of anti-cancer drugs

This project under the biotechnology research programme (1985-1989) is aimed at developing techniques for the production of anti-cancer drugs by genetic engineering. Anti-cancer applications of protein engineering could also emerge from an investigation of the relationships between the activity of anti-cancer molecules and their spatial structure.

Proposed action 70: Cofinancing by the European Community of research on the targeting of cancer-killing drugs

This project is intended to be carried out under the predictive medicine programme which has still to be proposed by the Commission to the Council.

Action 71: Cofinancing by the European Community of research on the pharmacology of anti-tumour substances

The biotechnology programme (1985-1989) has included since mid-1987 a pharmacotoxicological research project in the area of cancer. The aim is to develop in vitro methods of evaluating the pharmacological and secondary effects of anti-cancer drugs.

Action 72: Harmonization of testing standards for anti-cancer drugs

The Council of Ministers adopted a Directive on 22 December 1986 (OJ L 15, 17 January 1987) on the approximation of national measures relating to the placing on the market of high-technology medicinal products, particularly those derived from biotechnology (e.g. monoclonal antibodies, new medicinal products of significant anti-cancer therapeutic interest).

A meeting of cancer specialists in October 1987 led to the adoption of provisional guidelines, which are to be submitted to the parties concerned for comments. Their definitive adoption is scheduled for about September 1988.

Proposed action 73: Cofinancing by the European Community of research into the genome and human oncogenes

See proposed action 70.

Proposed action 74: Cofinancing by the European Community of research on nucleic acid probes

See proposed action 70.

Action 75: Regular evaluation of the action plan 1987-1989.

This is the objective of the present report.