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Sport4Cancer  
D5.2 Stakeholder  
Engagement  
Strategy

Sport4Cancer - Project: 101050018– ERASMUS-SPORT-2021-SNCESE

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## 1. About this document

This document outlines the Sport4Cancer stakeholder engagement strategy and the operative plan for its execution. The overarching objective of the strategy is to develop an organic relationship between the Sport4Cancer project and the wider multi-stakeholder community it addresses in order to ensure the achievement of the project's objectives.

## 2. Rationale

Today, the EU accounts for a tenth of the world's population, but a quarter of the world's cancer cases. Unless the relevant authorities at EU and Member State levels take decisive action, lives lost to cancer in the EU are set to increase by more than 24% by 2035, making it the leading cause of death in the EU. The overall economic impact of cancer in Europe is estimated to exceed €100 billion annually. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted cancer care, disrupting prevention and treatment, delaying diagnosis and vaccination, and affecting access to medicines. Since the pandemic began, the number of cancer diagnoses has decreased, foreshadowing a future increase in cases.

The EU urgently needs a renewed commitment to cancer prevention, treatment and care that recognises the growing challenges, and opportunities to overcome them, including the developments in cancer care. More precisely, there is a need for a concerted approach involving all relevant public authorities and key organizations of civil society that focuses on the patient and maximizes the potential of new technologies and insights; strengthens cooperation and opportunities for EU added value; eliminates inequalities in access to cancer knowledge, prevention, diagnosis and care; and delivers improved health outcomes to patients.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan unveiled in 2021 is the EU's response to these needs. The Plan reflects a political commitment to explore all existing paths and possibilities to take action against cancer. Mobilising the collective power of the EU to drive change to the benefit of its citizens, the Plan contains concrete, ambitious actions that will support, coordinate and complement Member States' efforts to reduce the human suffering caused by cancer. It marks the beginning of a new era in cancer prevention and care, where patients have access to high-quality screening, treatments and the latest state of the art technologies,

with support at EU level that allows scale and specialisation, while respecting Member States' responsibilities in health policy. In doing so, it delivers on the political guidelines set out by the Commission and forms a direct response to the strong and clear calls from the European Parliament for action in this area.

The aim of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is to tackle the entire disease pathway. It is structured around four key action areas where the EU can add the most value:

- (1) prevention;
- (2) early detection;
- (3) diagnosis and treatment; and
- (4) quality of life of cancer patients and survivors.

Over the coming years, it will focus on research and innovation, tap into the potential that digitalisation and new technologies offer, and mobilise financial instruments to support Member States [1]

The Plan is also a key pillar of a stronger European Health Union [2] and a more secure, better-prepared and more resilient EU. It outlines substantive actions to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer care and supports structural improvements for a more sustainable cancer pathway. In addition, the new, ambitious EU4Health programme 2021-2027 [3] and other EU initiatives and instruments will provide substantial financial support with €4 billion to Member States in their efforts to make their health systems more robust and more able to address cancer.

### 3. Sport4Cancer Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

This is the background that provides the main themes and activity streams of the stakeholder engagement strategy of the Sport4Cancer project. The fight against cancer across the EU remains in important respects fragmented and organized around specific government departments and organizations of civil society with topical focus areas. Yet, as the key strategic official documents of the European Commission and the Directorate-General for Internal Policies, among others stress "the fight against cancer is a team sport" and involves a wide spectrum of stakeholders from institutions of government and organizations of civil society which cross different administrative jurisdictions and areas of specialization and expertise.

In this context, the core organizing concept of the Sport4Cancer stakeholder engagement strategy is that it is only through well-concerted and collective team-like approaches that combine efforts at different levels – regional/local, national, and EU – that the fight against cancer, especially in the context of the potential of sport in this fight, can overcome individual weaknesses, reduce fragmentation, and deliver a more effective and more equal response to the disease. The strength and success of the strategy must also build on engaging and communicating with the wider public to raise visibility and understanding and support joint efforts. Equally important, long-term sustainable success will depend on the construction of partnerships among stakeholders that are underpinned by complementary interests.

The strategy is structured around four phases composed of distinct streams of activities:

## 1. Phase 1: Identification of stakeholder main groups and beyond

Phase 1 is dedicated to the identification of the main groups of stakeholders which are within the network of the Sport4Cancer consortium that will form the basis for building up the stakeholder community in support of the project's objectives. This is important to highlight that we would like to emphasize the main goal as the target for community building not the project its self.

In subsequent phases we will perform number of activities among which will be collecting the stakeholders' views, and further we will open up the discussion to all community to contribute to identify the topics which will further discussed during the scientific workshop and summarise as recommendation for future action towards implementation.

The initial groups of stakeholders identified so far are:

- **Sport professionals and amateurs** (associations, individuals).
- **Health Care specialists** (doctors, diagnosis leaders and physical specialists, individuals as well as associations at professional European and international level).
- **Policy Makers** (Ministries of Health, Sports, Economic developments, Finance, international governmental organisations, etc.).
- **Researchers** (from different fields including Health, Sport, Socio-economics, Technology, as well as Interdisciplinary researchers).
- **Industries** (from medical, sport and technology sectors including innovators like SME, as well as well-established leaders who produce new sensors, devices, deep tech technologies and methods to help understand and apply sport as effective medical treatment)
- **Social movements** like cancer- survivals associations
- **EU/national/International periodical actions** like R&D projects,

- **Others** (e.g. individuals which does not fit any of former, and might act as ambassadors for our actions)

The table with the list of stakeholders will be identified by the consortium during the implementation of the Phase 1 due to the attached template in section II.3 Table of stakeholders' template.

## 2. Phase 2: Consultations with stakeholders and rising visibility.

### *On-line, Face to face, interviews*

Phase 2 is composed of different consultations which the consortium will conduct among identified group of stakeholders including different formats like on-line survey and/or face-to-face meeting and/or online consultations and/or interviews with different stakeholders the project addresses. Based on the identification of stakeholders undertaken in Phase 1 these will include the well balanced representation of the individuals from different domains like sports, cancer medical practitioners, sport/cancer researchers and treatment specialists, cancer patients/survivors and other disabled people, as well as public authorities from the fields of sports, health, and social services. The main objective of such consultations is to develop an organic relationship with, and increase familiarity and visibility of the objectives of the Sport4Cancer project, namely, the importance of physical activity and the role of sports for cancer patients/survivors and the importance of social inclusion across these stakeholder communities in the national contexts of the project participants.

A parallel objective of Phase 2 is to construct a 'bridge' for the collection of continuous empirical feedback of the primary concerns and challenges of the project stakeholder communities for the better calibration and effectiveness of the Sport4Cancer project activities and facilitate the development of complementary and mutually supportive perspectives on the core issues involved in the dynamic interdependencies and benefits of the interplay across sports and the treatment of cancer and the improvement of cancer patients' and survivors' quality of life. Such a bridge is of importance in maximizing the impact and reach of Sport4Cancer and will provide an effective basis for the cross-border exchange of knowledge and experience across stakeholder communities.

Given the diversity of contexts Sport4Cancer addresses it is expected that the profiles and formal descriptions of functions of stakeholders will vary considerably across regions and participating countries. It is the responsibility of the partners most closely associated with their national environments to ensure that the project identifies and addresses stakeholders of the highest relevance to the project's objectives. This is of crucial importance in order to ensure consistency of and comparability of levels and functions across different national contexts.



We expect that the main profiles of these actors will be as follows - allowing for regional and national specificities pertaining to function and particular appellations in different contexts to be identified by the partners:

- The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL). The pan-European umbrella organization of cancer leagues around Europe (with 53 Member States) serves as a platform for the exchange of best practices, with members learning from each other's experiences. Their vision is ambitious, a Europe free of cancer, achieved through influencing cancer control policies. The ECL promotes cancer prevention, encourages cancer screening at EU level, ensures access to treatment and support, and supports the development and implementation of national cancer control programmes and cancer registries. <https://www.cancer.eu>
- National organizations involved in education, training, youth and sport
- Scientific researcher institutes and organizations specializing in oncology research
- Medical cancer specialists and carers
- Specialists in sports/health, with special attention to cancer research and treatment/rehabilitation
- Not-for-profit associations of volunteers operating at the sports/health interface
- Public sports and health authorities

The work to be performed during the consultations involves in-depth interviews with selected stakeholders in key sports and medical organizations specializing in cancer research and treatment. Based on preliminary analysis and assessment of the results of the interviews we will document the main results which will provide a 'living' view of the main issues involved in the role of sports and their impact on the treatment of cancer. In other words, the consultations and the resulting cases, building on the information that will be generated during the phase II, are designed to generate in-depth information on the areas and topics which further can become the subjects of research and innovation projects for further analysis. These identified areas will be then be discussed during the scientific workshop (Phase 3

A short list of themes needs to be outlined here based on the experience of project partners has been presented in the section II.1. Template for stakeholders' consultations.

### 3. Phase 3: Organization of high visibility event with the stakeholder community [S4C Workshop M8].

Phase 3 of the strategy involves the organization of a high visibility workshop designed to enable stakeholders to participate and explain the strategic orientation and challenges of their respective organizations and exchange experiences with their counterparts from other organizations and the wider scientific and research community involved in the domain, all under the project's guidance in order to identify priorities and begin formulating recommendations in accordance with stakeholders' opinions.

The workshop is being planned to take place on M8 as the part of Sport4Cancer big Event and will be associated with the larger congress which will be taken place on 20-21.04.2023. It will have an exploratory character, where Sport4Cancer's key topics identified during Phase 2 of the engagement strategy will be presented to the wider stakeholders to be followed by a first open discussion.

The Website of the event has been already established: [www.sport4cancermmg.com](http://www.sport4cancermmg.com) and the Programme will be further developed as the implementation of Phase 3.

The workshop will play an introductory role be to the Big Sport Event activities involving nearly 30 000 people. The major findings of Sport4Cancer will be presented and experiences across different stakeholder communities will be exchanged with the aim of showing how physical activity helps in the treatment of cancer, as well as the practice of certain physical activity during the recovery phase of cancer, causes improvement in the mood of patients, as well as improvements in their overall health. It will be the final plenary event of the project and will be a culmination of all project activities, presenting the results to the stakeholder community, and assessing community consensus around the White Paper recommendations planned in final IV Phase.

The results of the workshop will be further presented to already existing identified relevant events and activities at European and international levels. These include:

- European Week of Sport: A Europe-wide event with millions of participants, the European Week of Sport aims to promote sport and physical activity across Europe. It is held every September. Organised for the first time in 2015 its purpose is not simply to promote visibility, but also a tool to promote long-term sport and physical activity. Despite initial scepticism, 27 of the 28 Member States now participate in the initiative. [4]
- EU Sport Forum: The EU Sport Forum gathers key stakeholders from the world of sport to discuss challenges for the sector in the EU. [5]

- The World Health Organization (Europe), specifically the WHO European Region Physical Activity Strategy (in place until 2025). [6]
- WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer. [7]

#### 4. Phase 4: Beyond Sport4Cancer Project: Advocacy Board and Recommendation

Building on the work undertaken in Phases 1-3 of the engagement strategy Phase 4 involves the effort towards the identification of an Advocacy Board to Sport4Cancer initiative whose purpose is to take the project results further and articulate recommendations to the EC future agenda. We anticipate that the Advocacy Board will be composed of stakeholders, from the domains of sports, cancer research and treatment, and representatives of national sports and health authorities. The primary function of the Board will be to act as an Ambassador Corps for the findings of Sport4Cancer and as a sounding board or source of validation in order to ensure continuing relevance of the project's findings to its stakeholder bases. In this phase we will also look for the options to continue the research activities under the Horizon Europe and related programmes e.g. Mission 'Cancer' or Cluster 1: Health.

Identification of Advocacy Board members. Each of the stakeholder organizations targeted by the project holds important lessons for policy and the advancement of practices facilitating the interplay between sports and cancer research and treatment. However, this interplay is conditioned by specific institutional contexts across the EU and the members of the project. This is the principle that guides our approach to the formation of the Advocacy Board Sport4Cancer. The idea is to construct a forum that highlights the diversity of institutional contexts across the EU and how this diversity helps create conditions supportive intensifying the interplay between sport activities and the treatment of cancer patients. As such the Board will be composed of representatives that reflect the cultural, geographical and scientific diversity and institutional contexts of the countries participating in Sport4Cancer.

#### 4. Sport4Cancer's White Paper (D3.4)

The culmination of the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is a White Paper which will be produced in collaboration with all the other streams of activities that structure Sport4Cancer project. The Paper is designed to distil the lessons and experiences generated through the different activities streams of the project and articulate recommendations and policy-relevant actions in two distinct areas of the cancer/sports interface field: first, the relevant policy framework of

the European Commission regarding the fight against cancer and the role of sports and education in this fight, second, the cancer medical scientific community and the role of sports and education in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The project will contribute to several EU policies by submitting the White paper with the policy recommendations to boost the social inclusion of cancer patients, which will consist of the conclusions from the scientific workshop.

## 5. Operative plan and execution specifications

This section outlines the operative plan for the execution of the engagement strategy. It is composed of three subsections: subsection II.1 outlines the themes and questions on which the strategy will engage the stakeholder base of the project for in-depth consultations and the specifications for the conduct of interviews and the production of cases; subsection II.2 outlines the consultations documentation template; subsection II.3 lays out the profiles of the stakeholders to be engaged and the specifications of determining their role and relevance.

### **II.1. Template for stakeholders consultations.**

The initial list of questions to be explored with stakeholders will be developed in collaboration with the Sport4Cancer consortium partners in the form of a template. Examples of such questions are presented below and will be developed further by the consortium.

#### Template for Consultations in Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Phase I

- How would you assess the level of awareness and visibility of the role of sports in the prevention/treatment of cancer in your country?
- How would you assess the level of awareness and visibility of the role of sports in supporting social inclusion of cancer patients/survivors?
- What do you consider as the main challenges in increasing the role of sports in the prevention and treatment of cancer?
- What are the main challenges in involving more systematically cancer patients and survivors into sports activities?
- Is there a need for more systematic involvement of public sports and health authorities in designing policies and incentives schemes for increasing the role of sports in cancer prevention and treatment?

More detailed questions will be developed during the implementation of phase 2.

## II.2 Consultations documentation template.

In Phases 1 and 2 of the strategy each partner will contribute in the organization and conduct of stakeholder's consultations including interviews. The most important results of the interview will be then further contextualized and documented as outlines containing in-depth information on the areas and topics identified above. These documents will subsequently be synthesized into 'working ideas' which will provide the structure and content for the discussion during the workshop and further as the future proposals' topics and recommendations. Template for such cases will be elaborated together with the consortium.

## II.3 Table of stakeholders' template (to be used during the Phase 1 to identify stakeholders)

In order to classify and present the results of the stakeholders network development around the Sport4Cancer topics the table template will be developed together with consortium in order to, on one hand, systemise the information and share it among the consortium, and, on the other, respect the privacy rules attached to the contacts brought in the circulation.

The tables below will be further used to perform the stakeholders' consultation, present the results and contribute to the White Paper.

The example of structure of such a table is presented below:

Example: Name of the consortium member: Partner EIRR

	Name of the stakeholder	Category	Country	Suggested for in-depth interview	www	Contact details	Person in charge from the partner side
1	EUSOMA - European Society of Breast Specialists	NGO, Health Professionals Association	EU	Yes	<a href="https://www.eusoma.org">https://www.eusoma.org</a>	President	dr Anna Sad
2							
3							
...							

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