



PRESS RELEASE

EuropaBio welcomes World Cancer Day 2009

Brussels, 04 February 2009

EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries, highlights the importance of World Cancer Day, held today on 4 February 2009 for the fourth time, and congratulates the sponsor, the International Union Against Cancer (UICC), supported by the WHO, for its great efforts in promoting ways to ease the global burden of cancer, on this day, and throughout the year.

Cancer remains very high on the healthcare agenda: last year, cancer was responsible for 12% of deaths worldwide and, without medical intervention, the WHO estimates that 84 million people will die of cancer between 2005 and 2015. Although the number of cancer patients is increasing, cancer mortality rates are decreasing, indicating the positive impact of screening programmes and improved treatments. However, treatments for cancer are often difficult to develop due to the sheer number of different cancers, many of which are also rare diseases.

Biotech has been and continues to make remarkable contributions to develop new highly effective medicines and diagnostics. Because biotech-based medicines can more specifically target the cancer, while leaving healthy tissues and organs untouched, they are generally better tolerated compared to chemotherapy (1). As such, they help contribute towards easing patient suffering.

It is estimated that 2.8 million Europeans are affected by cancer every year. But cancer survival rates depends largely on what country you are in, with patients in some countries – such as Austria, France and Switzerland - having much broader access to newer cancer treatments than patients in other EU countries (2).

Developing a new cancer treatment requires significant investments in terms of painstakingly long R&D efforts and a massive amount of cash. The existence of a new treatment is a first step, but another has to follow, making the treatment available and accessible to the patient – no matter where in Europe he or she resides. 'Cancer patients can, after all, only benefit from new treatments if they have access to them,' said Willy De Greef, Secretary General of EuropaBio. He continued, "biotech treatments have already shown great promise in targeting cancer more effectively and offering patients an improved quality of life. World Cancer Day gives us the chance to focus on the plight of the cancer patient and engages us to continue our work, both in the development of new or improved medications and in ensuring that patients gain as quick as possible access to these lifesaving treatments once they have received their marketing authorisation"

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(1) To learn more about specific biotech treatments for cancer and the differences compared to traditional cancer treatments, please see <http://www.bioimpact.org/en/index.php>.

(2) As highlighted e.g. in the recent "**Comparator Report on Patient Access to Cancer Drugs in Europe**", a Karolinska Institute/Stockholm School of Economics compilation. <http://www.comparatorreports.se/Comparator%20report%20on%20patient%20access%20to%20cancer%20drugs%20in%20Europe%20jan%202015%202009.pdf>

For further information, please contact

Julie Kjestrup
Healthcare Manager, EuropaBio

Tel: +32 2 739 11 78; Email: j.kjestrup@europabio.org

Rebecca Weaver

Communications and Events Manager, EuropaBio

Tel: +32 2 739 11 84; Email: r.weaver@europabio.org

EuropaBio

EuropaBio is the European Association for Bioindustries, solely and uniquely bringing together bioscience companies from all fields of research and development, testing, manufacturing and distribution of biotechnology products. It has 68 corporate and 5 associated members, 4 BioRegions and 25 national biotechnology associations representing some 1800 small and medium sized enterprises involved in research.