The European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer (ECIBC) is a person-centred sustainable initiative aiming to improve and harmonise breast cancer care in Europe.

Who we are

The ECIBC is coordinated by the Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) under the auspices of Directorate General for Health and Food Safety. The JRC is the European Commission’s in-house science service and provides an inclusive and transparent platform for engaging all stakeholders. The JRC is independent of any national, commercial and private interests.

Why this initiative

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Europe. It is the most deadly cancer in women: one out of every six women with cancer will die from breast cancer. In addition, incidence and mortality rates for breast cancer widely range across countries: although a higher mortality rate in some countries may be due to higher incidence rate, in others lower survival of women is the main cause of a higher mortality rate. This reflects major inequalities, including diverse quality of care. Hence, there is considerable potential to reduce the burden of cancer and inequalities at European level.
The EU Member States acknowledged the need for coordinated action to tackle the burden of cancer via the Council conclusions of 2008. As a consequence, the European Commission launched ECIBC in 2012. It aims at ensuring that all breast cancer care processes are performed with the quality and appropriateness defined by evidence and are accessible to all citizens. ECIBC works towards this ambitious and crucial goal with the support of experts, patients, and other stakeholders.

**ECIBC objectives**

The four specific objectives are to establish:

1. a voluntary European quality assurance scheme for breast cancer services (the *European QA scheme*) addressing all care processes including screening, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, survivorship care, and palliative care;
2. evidence-based recommendations supporting the *European QA scheme*:
   - the *European guidelines for breast cancer screening and diagnosis* (the *European Breast Guidelines*);
   - a platform of guidelines covering all care processes;
3. a European training template on digital breast screening;
4. a web interface (the *ECIBC web hub*) offering complete information since the ECIBC development phase. It hosts the ECIBC objectives, their life-cycle processes, and in future will also list the certified breast cancer services. Key-information will be available in all EU official languages.

**Methodology**

Two working groups, involving experts and patients, voluntarily support the JRC in carrying forward the ECIBC. Inclusive and transparent processes are applied, such as systematic literature review, evidence grading, panel ratings, and open calls for feedback. In addition, countries have a special role in providing inputs to ensure that what is being developed is feasible and can be implemented, hence impacting on quality of care and, possibly, outcomes.

**First available outcomes**

- Piloting of the *European QA scheme* in 2017, and making it available to all in 2018.

**Want to know more?**

If you are interested in contributing or simply in knowing more, please visit the ECIBC web hub at: 


or contact us at 

[jrc-cancer-policy-support@ec.europa.eu](mailto:jrc-cancer-policy-support@ec.europa.eu).

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