

Europe Marks Its First Cancer Literacy Day

A new annual European observance dedicated to reducing cancer inequalities through improved literacy, informed decision-making, and equitable access to cancer knowledge

Save the date: 14 October 2026. Partners from across Europe will launch the inaugural **Cancer Literacy Day**, a landmark initiative that aims to become a permanent annual European movement dedicated to **advancing equitable access to cancer knowledge**. Coordinated through the [CURTAIN project \(Beating Cancer Inequalities through Literacy in Europe\)](#) and supported by a growing network of EU4Health and Cancer Mission projects, Cancer Literacy Day contributes directly to the objectives of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the EU Cancer Mission.

The Challenge: Cancer Inequalities Persist Across Europe

With nearly 2.8 million new cancer cases reported annually across EU+2 countries, cancer remains one of Europe's most pressing public health challenges. Despite significant advances in prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment, deep inequalities persist across regions, socio-economic groups, rural and urban populations, and vulnerable communities.

A critical, yet overlooked, driver of these disparities is **cancer literacy**: the ability to find, understand, evaluate, and act on cancer-related information. Low levels of cancer literacy limit people's ability to engage in prevention, participate in screening, understand diagnoses, and make informed treatment decisions — compounding existing inequalities across the continuum of care.

What is Cancer Literacy Day?

Cancer Literacy Day is an annual European observance, held every 14 October, dedicated to:

- Raising awareness of cancer literacy as a key determinant of health equity;
- Promoting access to reliable, evidence-based cancer information;
- Encouraging prevention, screening participation, early diagnosis, and informed decision-making;
- Combating cancer misinformation and disinformation;

- Fostering dialogue between policymakers, healthcare professionals, researchers, patient organisations, civil society, and citizens;
- Advocating for the integration of cancer literacy into European and national health policies.

“Cancer Literacy Day is not just a date on the calendar. It is the beginning of a permanent European commitment. By making cancer knowledge accessible, understandable, and culturally appropriate for every citizen, we take a decisive step toward a more equitable future for cancer care in Europe.”

— Dr. Marius Geantă, Coordinator of the CURTAIN Project

A Permanent European Movement

Cancer Literacy Day is envisioned as more than a one-off awareness campaign. It is designed to grow year on year into a permanent European movement — a shared annual moment of reflection, advocacy, and action that sustains momentum far beyond any single project or funding cycle.

By establishing this recurring observance, organisers aim to build a growing community of practice around cancer literacy, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and ensure that access to trustworthy, understandable, and culturally appropriate cancer information is recognised as a fundamental component of quality cancer care across Europe.

A Growing Coalition of European Projects

Cancer Literacy Day is supported by a network of EU4Health and Cancer Mission projects united by a shared commitment to reducing cancer inequalities. Current supporting projects include:

- [4P-CAN \(Personalized CANcer Primary Prevention research through Citizen Participation and digitally enabled social innovation\)](#)
- [CAREWAY \(Cancer Awareness, Resources, and Education Pathways\)](#)
- [iINTERVENE \(Supports Health Literacy for Cancer Prevention and Care\)](#)
- [BClear \(Advancing Cancer Bladder Literacy in Europe\)](#)
- [CLEAR-PC \(Cancer Literacy Education and Awareness Resources for Prostate Cancer\)](#)
- [CHOICE \(Breast Cancer Literacy\)](#)

Join the Movement

Organisations interested in supporting or contributing to Cancer Literacy Day are invited to contact the organising partners to explore opportunities for collaboration and engagement. A dedicated Cancer Literacy Day event will be taking place in Brussels on 14 October 2026, besides local events across Europe throughout the year.

Who is behind Cancer Literacy Day

Cancer Literacy Day is organised by the CURTAIN project consortium. The CURTAIN project (Beating Cancer Inequalities through Literacy in Europe) positions cancer literacy as a central pillar for reducing inequalities across the continuum of cancer care. CURTAIN strengthens cancer literacy among citizens, patients, healthcare professionals, organisations, and policymakers through evidence-based tools, capacity-building activities, digital innovation, and stakeholder engagement.

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