

Established in 1977 to promote greater cooperation among European cancer centers and institutes in the field of cancer collaborative research, the «Organisation of European Cancer Institutes» held its first General Assembly in 1980. Its founders designed a structure aimed at promoting efficient partnership across Europe, notwithstanding its linguistic barriers and traditional research heterogeneity. In 2005 the Organisation was remodelled into OECE-EEIG Organisation of European Cancer Institutes, European Economic Interest Grouping so to keep with the ongoing European developments. The OECE Central Office is located in Brussels; the Office of the President has its seat in Amsterdam while the Coordinating Secretariat and Liaison Office is located in Genoa.

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OECE is a continuously growing and developing network, presently regrouping 72 cancer centers and institutions across Europe. OECE is dynamically working in crosscut expertise projects organised involving the OECE Working Groups, Activities and Members. Currently, there are 5 main Working Groups and 2 Activities financed through membership fees and also supported by external funding bodies.

DEVELOPING THE FUTURE IN COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CARE

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OECI OBJECTIVES

The OECI is an organisation of cancer institutes, aiming to improve quality in cancer care and translational research in Europe from an organisational viewpoint. Although professionals such as physicians, nurses and researchers are the core of cancer care and research, a smooth organisation, efficient logistics and state of the art complex infrastructure are needed. A strong organisation of cancer institutes at a European level can contribute to the production and diffusion of knowledge in order to reducing fragmentation, increasing competitiveness with the ultimate goal to find new and better treatments, providing more comprehensive care and improving patients' quality of life through an evidence-based medicine with a holistic approach.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE OECI

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN ONCOLOGIC CARE AND RESEARCH

In order to have a significant impact on the quality of care, the OECI has the objective to include 50% of the membership of the OECI in the Accreditation/Designation program within 2014.

EUROPEAN UNION

The bottom up approach of the Accreditation/Designation program contributes to the visibility of the OECI at European level and enables the Grouping to start a lobby for structural financing of cancer centers at National and EU levels.

ORGANISATIONAL QUALITY

As a European Association of Cancer Centers, the OECI is launching a working group on organisational expertise and improvement, in order to strengthen the operational structure that facilitates translational research and integrated care. In addition to the Accreditation/Designation program, a detailed and focused benchmarking among members will be performed and, if possible, a pilot executed.

MOLECULAR PATHOBIOLOGY AND BIOBANKS

In view of the crucial role of the pathology departments in oncology, of the expected "flood" of new markers and diagnostics in a scope of "OMICS", the OECI will act in close cooperation with the EurocanPlatform and the EACR strengthen its activities in molecular pathology so to support its members in Europe through developing this field and establishing cooperation between interested members.

SURVIVORSHIP CARE

In view of the huge number of cancer survivors, partly due to increasing success rates of treatments, the OECI is stimulating cooperation on survivorship management which is specifically multidisciplinary for its nature. "Comprehensive Cancers Centers" should play a leading role in the development of survivorship care and programs throughout Europe. The OECI intends to demonstrate its "expertise" on this topic in the coming years.

EDUCATION

Educational activities will especially take place in the above mentioned fields in order to strengthen the aims of the OECI and disseminate the generated knowledge.

INTERNAL ORGANISATION

In order to have a sustainable organization, the OECI should strive for a membership of at least 100 to 120. For the coming years the managerial support will be organised through the Liaison Office located in Genoa and under the coordination of the Office of the President in Amsterdam.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Regular updating and reports of the OECI activities will appear on the website which is not necessarily cutting edge, but sufficiently state-of-the-art site technology. The e-Cancermediscience as official OECI e-Journal should be maximally exploited through regular reports, videos and blogs.

Wim H. van Harten
OECI President



The **Accreditation/Designation WG (A&D)** aims at defining consensual European quality standards and criteria supporting the concept of Comprehensive Cancer Centers with integration of care, research and education. The WG developed a tool for professionals enabling the performances of the cancer institutions to be assessed both internally and externally. In order to increase the efficacy of cancer research and to strengthen joint public/private research in Europe for more competitive cancer research, thanks to the A&D WG, the OECI is producing a database of cancer centers detailing the available infrastructures and human resources so to allow the identification of the structures where accelerated development of innovative treatments or high-quality clinical research is feasible. One of the main goal of the A&D WG is the establishment of criteria for the European Comprehensive Cancer Centers and the harmonisation of their resources in order to reach a critical mass for research.

The **Biobanks and Molecular Pathobiology WG (BAMP)** aims to promote new developments in histopathology, cytology and molecular testing applying new updated tumor classifications and prognostic criteria based upon modern technologies such as molecular testing. The WG focuses on education, training and on the optimal organization in Cancer Institutes involving young pathologists and molecular biologists, as well as on providing support for staff members in less developed areas, which need to up-to-date on these new approaches in cancer diagnosis including sample collection and storage. Regular annual meetings are organized with the support of the OECI Cancer Centers and in conjunction with other European Cancer Societies. The WG wants to contribute to an efficient infrastructure for the OECI multi-centre research platforms, providing request options for samples collected from cancer patients for translational and clinical research to be used for cooperative multicentres research adopting agreed rules for access and exchange.

The OECI considers to start a **WG on Cancer Prevention and Early Diagnosis (CPED)**, to explore the following objectives:

- to foster links with and influence other European activities concerned with cancer prevention;
- to develop additional standards on cancer prevention for consideration by the OECI designation and accreditation program;
- to survey current levels of service, educational and research activities relating to cancer prevention and early detection amongst OECI members;
- to provide a mechanism for the development of prevention research collaborations between OECI member organizations and to secure the necessary funding.

The **Education and Training WG (ETWG)** aims at coordinating and implementing the educational activities of the European Cancer Institutes by promoting the establishment of a European Area for E&T in oncology, and stimulating tighter relationships among the OECI members, while defining a better connection with external bodies, such as the European School of Oncology, EACR, ECCO, and ESMO among others. Through the ETWG's plan of activities, the OECI helps in finding practical solutions following the Lisbon goals, tackling fragmentation in training, sharing knowledge and facilities among CCCs, facilitating the launch of new

research initiatives, reinforcing existing successful actions, improving knowledge on new emerging fields and exchanging personnel with industries and vice-versa.

The **EurocanPlatform WG (EP)** is a NoE of European Comprehensive Cancer Centers recently financed by the EC within the 7FP; through membership and personal involvement, it is closely linked to the OECI. The EurocanPlatform works towards the decreasing of cancer mortality by cooperation of major comprehensive cancer centers and is aiming to bring translational research results to a new level. It will connect the necessary resources and provide know-how for the entire research continuum: basic research, early and late translational research, clinical research, epidemiological research, implementation in care and population based outcome research. A strong focus is related to discovery-driven translational cancer research in five selected tumours: breast, head-neck, lung, malignant melanoma and pancreatic cancer. Joint structures and programs for early detection will contribute to optimal treatment, while novel prevention research programs will integrate prevention activities in clinical cancer centers as well as public prevention. EurocanPlatform is unique in its nature and represents a commitment from cancer centers to join forces and resources in order to fight cancer. The OECI WGs are leading or contributing partners in some of the NoE work packages and the OECI is directly committed to dissemination and communication activities.

The **Communication and Dissemination Activity (CADA)** aims at facilitating exchanges between scientists and clinicians within the OECI Institutes, according to cancer type of interest, specialization or technology skill; it also aims at helping people working on common projects, on developing and sharing trial protocols, data, meta-analyses, more generally, any activity which needs connectivity and communication. The Activity is developed in connection with eCancermediscience which became the official Journal of the OECI and in which web visitors can read on science and watch videos from 203 countries connecting on eCancer.eu. This Activity aims also at better disseminate the initiatives of the OECI Members, WGs and Activities through the publication of leaflets illustrating the OECI as a whole as well as the single initiatives. As registered Publisher, the OECI already produced specific titles such as: the OECI Report 2009, From Biobanks to Research Repositories, the Accreditation and Designation Manual and the first out of 6 volumes of the START-OECI Options and Recommendations of Cancer Diagnosis and Therapy: www.oeci.eu/Publications.aspx

The **STARTOECI Activity** is an evidence-based "state of the art" instrument on cancer diagnosis and treatment, created to support oncologists and physicians in their everyday oncology practice. In order to provide more comprehensive care and improve patients' quality of life through an evidence-based medicine, START-OECI works according to a consistent methodology, whereby each chapter results from a definite, internal collaborative process. The chapter is published online and in Critical Reviews in Oncology and Haematology as well as in specific series of Volumes which are published directly by the OECI. The first volume can be downloaded from www.oeci.eu. About 30% of the START Contributors belong to the OECI Members or Associated Members.

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