

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000820/25
to the Commission
Dimitris Tsiodras (PPE)
(24 February 2025)**

Subject: A set of measures to support cancer startups

There are around 1 027 cancer startups in the EU (1 325 in the US), with 41.6% in the early stage of development, while 34.7% are still in the seed stage ⁽¹⁾.

In contrast, US companies are growing faster, with 40% of them being at a more advanced stage (compared to 24% in the EU) and holding significantly larger patent portfolios (in technologies such as cellular immunotherapy, gene therapy and image analysis) than their European counterparts. US-based companies hold 82% more international patents than their EU counterparts, while startups and early-stage companies exceed EU portfolios by 58% and 56%, respectively.

In view of the above:

1. What actions will the Commission take to ensure that Europe remains at the forefront of global cancer research?
2. In view of the Startup Strategy, how will the Commission enhance access to finance, and is the Commission considering the creation of a European initiative to enhance the participation of institutional investors in venture capital?
3. How will the Commission support startups in securing and strategically using their intellectual property rights?

Submitted: 24.2.2025

**Answer given by Ms Zaharieva on behalf of the European Commission
(1 August 2025)**

Established in 2021, the Horizon Europe Cancer Mission ⁽¹⁾ aims to improve the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030, through prevention, cure and for those affected by cancer including their families, to live longer and better ⁽²⁾.

Since 2023, the Commission has started a collaboration with the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health in the United States on childhood and lung cancer, in the context of the EU Cancer Mission and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan ⁽³⁾. More recently, the EU Cancer Mission has started working with Japan.

Moreover, the Commission will establish a European ecosystem for clinical research, with additional contributions from the planned Life Sciences Strategy and the Biotech Act.

In line with the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy ⁽⁴⁾, the Commission, in coordination with the European Investment Bank Group, will work with large institutional investors to develop a voluntary European Innovation Investment Pact for those who commit to invest part of their assets under management into EU funds of funds, venture capital funds and unlisted scaleups.

The strategy also announces European Innovation Council ⁽⁵⁾ expansion and a Scaleup Europe Fund. Other actions include the development of i) a framework for intellectual property (IP) valuation for IP-backed financing in cooperation with the EU Intellectual Property Office, and ii) a blueprint for licensing, royalty- and revenue-sharing and equity participation for academic institutions and their inventors when commercialising IP and creating spinoffs, following best commercial practice.

Additionally, the Commission is supporting startups through the EU IP Helpdesk ⁽⁶⁾ that offers free-of-charge, expert advice on a variety of IP-related topics.

¹ European Patent Office, New frontiers in oncology: an evolving innovation ecosystem, 2025.

⁽¹⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/eu-mission-cancer_en.

⁽²⁾ To date, Horizon Europe funding on cancer research and innovation totals EUR 2.4 billion, of which EUR 0.5 billion to support 60 Cancer Mission projects.

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_342.

⁽⁴⁾ Adopted on 28 May 2025. Available at: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/2f76a0df-b09b-47c2-949c-800c30e4c530_en?filename=ec_rtd_eu-startup-scaleup-strategy-communication.pdf.

⁽⁵⁾ https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en.

⁽⁶⁾ https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/regional-helpdesks/european-ip-helpdesk_en.