

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001032/26
to the Commission
Dan-Ștefan Motreanu (PPE)
(11 March 2026)

Subject: Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

In a special report, the European Court of Auditors delivered a lukewarm assessment of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, launched in 2021 with a EUR 4 billion budget. While the plan has encouraged several Member States to adopt or update national cancer strategies and has supported initiatives such as the European Cancer Imaging Initiative, auditors identified significant shortcomings.

They highlighted duplication of projects, insufficient Member State ownership, uneven screening rates across the EU, and weaknesses in design, including the absence of quantified targets, clear deadlines and consistent indicators. Concerns were also raised about the sustainability of certain flagship projects and future funding beyond 2027, especially following cuts to the EU4Health programme.

Given these findings, how does the Commission intend to strengthen governance, eliminate duplication, introduce measurable targets and secure sustainable financing to ensure that Europe's Beating Cancer Plan delivers tangible and lasting results after 2027?

Submitted: 11.3.2026

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(7 May 2026)

The Commission took note of the Court of Auditors' Special Report, which was prepared with the full collaboration of the Commission.

The identified shortcomings were raised as potential risks, rather than instances of inefficient use of funds. The finding of persisting inequalities among Member States, for example in cancer screening, is in line with the analyses from the Cancer Inequalities Registry ⁽¹⁾.

These results underline the importance of the Commission's commitment to tackle inequalities in a cross-cutting manner, as is done through numerous Cancer Plan actions ⁽²⁾, ⁽³⁾, ⁽⁴⁾ which will need more time to evolve and show impact.

The Commission has accepted the recommendations from the report to mitigate the identified risks and is currently working on follow-up actions.

The Commission is continuously investing in efforts to ensure complementarity and sustainability of Cancer Plan actions and is committed to strengthening these efforts. Discussions on how to improve the governance of the Cancer Plan are ongoing with Member States.

In terms of funding, the Commission cannot make any commitments going beyond the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), while negotiations between the co-legislators on the next MFF are still ongoing.

As the report notes, due to the complexity and varied nature of the Cancer Plan actions, there is no single end date or unified timeline.

The Commission regularly publishes an Implementation Roadmap to track milestones and key deliverables for all actions. The report also acknowledged that the 2025 review ⁽⁵⁾ improved transparency on progress.

The Commission is also working to establish a Cancer Plan-wide monitoring framework by the end of 2027 and will seek to evaluate the results and impact of the actions by 2030.

⁽¹⁾ <https://cancer-inequalities.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>.

⁽²⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.473.01.0001.01.ENG.

⁽³⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/non-communicable-diseases/cancer/europes-beating-cancer-plan-eu4health-financed-projects/projects/eucanscreen_en.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://cancer-screening-and-care.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en>.

⁽⁵⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/latest-updates/review-europes-beating-cancer-plan-2025-02-04_en.