



CraNE Joint Action

The newest European project in the field of cancer

The CraNE Joint Action-JA, (complete project name: Network of Comprehensive Cancer Centres-Preparatory activities on creation of National Comprehensive Cancer Centres and EU Networking) was proposed for funding in response to the Flagship Number 5 of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, which defines that the European Commission will establish by 2025, an EU Network linking recognised National Comprehensive Cancer Centres (CCCs) in every Member State (MS). The Europe's Beating Cancer Plan aims to ensure that 90% of eligible patients have access to such centres by 2030. In order to facilitate the establishment of such an EU Network, CraNE JA is preparing the necessary preconditions, administrative, professional, and those related to high-quality performance. This is necessary to facilitate both the integration of the existing CCCs as well as to support the MSs who still need to develop and certify such centres. The CraNE JA will also provide an assessment on sustainability and feasibility as well as link the development of an EU Network of CCCs and CCCs in individual MSs to the development of national and regional Comprehensive Cancer Care Networks (CCCNs). This way, the existing organisational and functional models of cancer care will be taken into account and incorporated into the proposed solution. CCCs have grown to be important providers of advanced cancer care, research and education in most MSs of the EU. Their numbers differ across countries, but generally, most EU MSs have at least one CCC.

The main aim of CraNE JA is to create an EU network of the already existing and newly established CCCs, to support the implementation of quality-assured early detection,

screening, diagnosis, treatment, support to cancer survivors, research and training of the cancer workforce.

The specific objectives of CraNE JA are:

1. To endorse the sustainability of the outputs of the CraNE JA towards future implementation into cancer care structures in the EU MSs
2. To create an EU Network of national CCCs to improve cancer care and avoid the unacceptable disparities currently present across the EU
3. To further develop the access and availability of the comprehensive high quality of care in CCCNs to all European MSs and align the high standards in cancer care for all quality assured institutions with a focus on the interfaces between care and research (CCCN and CCC).
4. To develop a consensus model for CCCs, both standalone centres as well as centres, which are part of universities or general hospitals
5. To identify and analyze the current practices and models of organisation in real-life settings as key references to assess how high-quality care and research are available to all cancer patients in a given regional and local levels through networking models.

The kick-off meeting of CraNE JA was held on November 3, 2022 at the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia in Brussels. The project officially started on October 1, 2022. CraNE JA brings together 25 Competent Authorities and 19 Affiliated Entities from 25 different countries, marking 44 partners in total. The CraNE JA partners are uniquely placed to implement the network of CCCs in Europe. The target group of CraNE JA are the main actors who will be concerned in the future development of the network of CCCs: representatives of MSs, networks of CCCs, European organizations, and experts. Patient advocates and representatives are included in the work of work packages (WPs) and represented in the Stakeholder Forum. The JA is led using traditional project management approaches supplemented through coordinator National Institute of Public Health of Republic of Slovenia-NIJZ's extensive experience of coordinating other JAs in the field of cancer (EPAAC, CanCon and iPAAC) and novel software solutions for project management. The coordinator is responsible also for the external coordination with other closely related projects, such as JANE and UNCAN.eu. CraNE JA is organised in a total of eight WPs, four of which are standard, while

four represent the core tasks on the contents of the project. The four horizontal WPs will be provided for by Slovenia - WP1 (Coordination), Greece - WP2 (Dissemination), Romania and Croatia - WP3 (Evaluation), while WP4 on sustainability will be provided jointly by Belgium and Poland. The work of the core WPs can be seen as two pairs of WPs. In other words, WP5 (EU Network of CCCs), led by Italy and WP7 (Framework and criteria to enable the implementation of CCCs within an EU Network), led by France and Norway represent work on the EU Network of CCCs, where WP5 is providing the theoretical, practical and administrative framework, while WP7 is providing for the standards of care, research, education and training tasks. They are complementary and closely coordinated. On the other hand, WP 6 (Organization of comprehensive, high-quality cancer care in CCCNs), led by Germany and WP8 (Equitable access to high-quality care and research: networks in the context of CCCs), led by Spain focus on CCCNs. WP6 will further elaborate on the standards and quality of care of CCCNs and their relationship with CCCs, while WP8 will focus on the different organisational models of CCCNs in the EU MS, including the variations in their relationship with the respective CCCs.

The OECI - Organisation of European Cancer Institutes - holds a subcontract from OUH/OUS in order to complete a survey of existing and potential Comprehensive Cancer Centres within WP7, and to assist with our expertise in the development of research standards in WP7. OECI has completed the survey and presented the Report to workpackage leaders, thus completing the milestone in this key task. OECI in M1-M12 has also advised OUS/OUH and INCa on the development of standards for CCCs in research, prevention, education and training, and the links with clinical standards in iPAAC. OECI has attended workpackage 7 meeting in Oslo, Paris, and Bled and several of the Steering Committee videoconferences. OECI has also advised WP5 on the development of Governance processes for the EU Network of CCCs.

The CraNE JA project, which will last two years received funding from the European Union through the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) within the framework of the EU Health Program (EU4Health) 2021-2027.

Literature:

European Commission, 2021. Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: A new EU approach to prevention, treatment and care. Available at https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/eu_cancer-plan_en_0.pdf

Technical Description of CraNE Joint Action. EU4Health Programme (EU4H) 2022.

Prepared by Marjetka Jelenc, CraNE JA Coordination Team