

✘ Today, on World Cancer Day, the European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen announced the [launch of a EU-wide public consultation](#) on the forthcoming “Beating Cancer Plan”, which aims to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care of cancers in the European Union.

In her speech at the European Parliament, von der Leyen recalled how her little sister died of cancer at the age of 11: “My little sister’s death has changed my life,” she said. “I guess it is also because of her death that I decided to study medicine and become a medical doctor. And it is because of her, and my mother, and one of my brothers, that I care so much about fighting cancer.”

Before the formal presentation of the plan, expected in the final quarter of 2020 all citizens, including researchers, are invited to provide feedback, during the next three months.

“We’re ready to invest in this, but we want to hear from the scientific community,” von der Leyen added.

The Commission is currently setting up a Common Health Data Space infrastructure to allow scientists and clinicians to share data, which will be also useful for developing artificial intelligence technologies that might improve early diagnosis and care.

EU’s health commissioner Stella Kyriakides, who has been personally diagnosed with cancer on three occasions, mentioned the ‘mission’ on cancer that will coordinate efforts within the EU’s 2021-27 R&D programme, Horizon Europe, stressing that “innovation is pointless unless it’s available to patients”. Rare cancers and childhood cancers are still plagued by “too many gaps in our understanding”, she said.