

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CONSULTATION:

Anchoring EUCCC Certification
in National Realities

WP5 – Inclusion, Certification and
Adherence to EUCCC Certification

CYPRUS COUNTRY PROFILE



Co-funded by
the European Union



THE EUROPEAN COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTRE NETWORK



Co-funded by
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Context: existing certification systems and organization of cancer care

Mandatory certification for all hospitals is a provision of the country's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (2021–2026)¹

Data on quality are not systematically collected by the public or private sectors, so the quality of hospital care is not routinely assessed. However, the accreditation of healthcare services is expected to guarantee the quality and effectiveness of services provided². There is a governmental programme to cover a share of the costs related to accreditation.

In 2022, the largest integrated healthcare public provider State Health Services Organization (SHSO), with 9 hospitals and 37 health centers in all cities and districts, signed an agreement with Accreditation Canada for the accreditation of its hospitals in the following years.³ Moreover, some of the contracted private hospitals have already been accredited.

Other international certifications and accreditations such as Caspe Healthcare Knowledge System (CHKS), ISO9001 for quality management systems and Accreditation Canada can be found in Cyprus.

According to a new legislative framework, certification will become compulsory. EUCCC certification will probably be included in this framework that should be voted on in the parliament in 2026.

Organization of cancer care

Diagnostics and treatment

While all major cities in the country have a general hospital, oncology clinics are mostly concentrated in large urban centers, such as Nicosia and Limassol; in other hospitals operated by the SHSO, onsite visits by oncologists take place at regular intervals.

Cancer care is both offered in the public and private sector, as well as in specialised oncology centers and general hospitals.

The Bank of Cyprus Oncology Center, established in 1998 as a public–private partnership, is a pilot site in the EUnetCCC JA WP4 and aspires to become a CCC. The Center delivers the majority of tertiary oncology care in the country and essentially functions as a public oncology institution. It plays a central role in managing newly diagnosed cancer cases and has built a network of institutions, facilities, and healthcare professionals across detection, diagnosis, treatment, and continuity of care.

There are **two major NGOs responsible for palliative care**: Cyprus Anti-Cancer Society and the Cyprus Association for Cancer Patients and Friends (PASYKAF).

The Cyprus Cancer Research Institute (CCRI) was established in 2019 by three respectively academic, clinical and diagnostic institutions (University of Cyprus, Bank of Cyprus Oncology Center and Karaïskakio Foundation). The CCRI acts as a center of excellence in cancer research that will both be a hub for researchers throughout the country and focus on international collaboration. Research and care delivery coordination will be an important step forward, as the field of cancer is fragmented in Cyprus.

The creation of the National Cancer Institute, a new cancer care coordination and supervision body

The 2019 National Cancer Strategy was launched to unify all cancer-related resources into a single network, improve data availability for the scientific community, coordinate prevention efforts, promote research, and enhance care delivery using a multidisciplinary approach.

The National Cancer Strategy foresees the establishment of a National Cancer Institute, approved by the government in 2024, currently in the process of being approved by the Parliament, and soon to be in the public consultation stage⁴.

It will be a significant addition to the cancer policy framework in Cyprus, as it will be responsible for the organization, evaluation, and accreditation of all oncology services, focusing on the key pillars of action: prevention, early diagnosis and treatment, research, and innovation. It is set to act as an aligning body for all stakeholders, including social insurance, providers, facilities, patient associations and academia. Its goal is also to rationalise the supply of cancer care in the country⁵.

Identified barriers towards the implementation of EUCCC certification in the country

- Coordination and system-wide networks are still lacking

There needs to be a further rationalisation and coordination of the infrastructure.

- The financing model of oncology is not always virtuous

Oncology is not profitable, hindering development of new services. There is a new economic model with fixed funding for oncology currently being developed.

Identified enablers towards the implementation of EUCCC certification in the country

- Good capacity in infrastructure and human resources

Despite being small, Cyprus is endowed with good coverage of oncologists and equipment.

- High degree of political support

There is a high degree of political support from the ministry.

- Good culture of certification

According to a new legislative framework, certification will become compulsory and will potentially include EUCCC certification. As an additional incentive to undergo the certification process, there is a government programme to cover certification costs.

- Strong emphasis on cross-border collaborations

Cross-border collaboration is considered important for Cyprus as a small country, due to pharma-companies' lack of willingness to choose the country for clinical trials. Thus, the collaboration is envisioned to boost patients' access to research and drugs. Furthermore, the network is considered attractive for exchanging knowledge amongst professionals, e.g. on Molecular Tumour Boards.

- Development of national standards at the level of European best practice

EUCCC will support development of national standards at the highest EU best practice levels

Conditions for successful EUCCC certification implementation in the country

- The new National Cancer Institute will coordinate and set the standard for the development of cancer care providers.
- EUCCC inclusion in the possible new legislation of compulsory certification.
- Sustained political support will be essential. With national elections scheduled in 2026, it will be important that the incoming government upholds the momentum and commitments made by its predecessor.

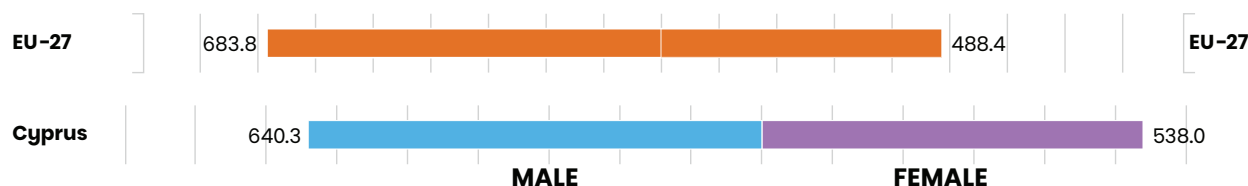
Number of OECI-certified CCCs: 0

Number of EUCCC pilot centers: 1

Epidemiology: incidence, mortality and survival rates

Incidence rate:

Estimated incidence, both sexes, all sites but non-melanoma skin, 2022 (per 100 000 population)



Mortality rate:

Cancer mortality
ASMR per 100 000 population



Survival rates:

For the selection of cancers:

Colon cancer 5-year survival
% survival for patients diagnosed 2010-2014



Breast cancer 5-year survival
% survival for women diagnosed 2010-2014



Lung cancer 5-year survival
% survival for patients diagnosed 2010-2014



Screening performance

Breast cancer screening
% of target population



Cervical cancer screening
% of target population



Colorectal cancer screening
% of target population

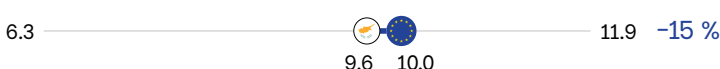


Risk factors

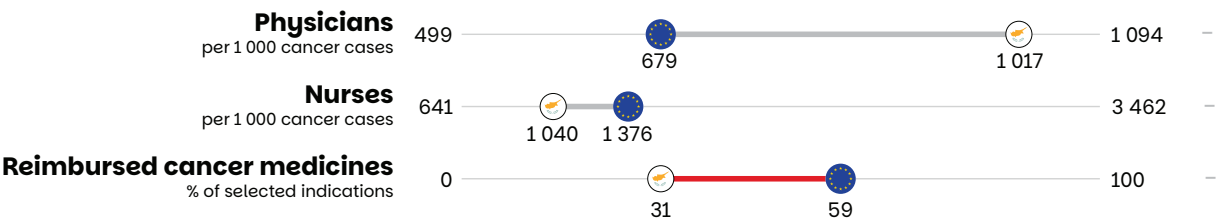
Daily smoking
% of population aged 15+



Alcohol consumption
Litres per capita, population aged 15+



Human resources and infrastructure



Number of clinical trials: 35

Endnotes

1. Accreditation of Public and Private Hospitals - Πύλη Ενημέρωσης Χρηματοδοτικών Προγραμμάτων - ΓΔ Ανάπτυξης
2. 'Cyprus: Health System Review 2024'. Accessed 23 December 2024. <https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/publications/i/cyprus-health-system-review-2024>.
3. Cyprus Hospitals Uniting to Advance Safer Care - Accreditation Canada
4. Govt's U-turn on National Cancer Institute praised by MPs | Cyprus Mail
5. Measures to improve cancer situation in Cyprus



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