https://www.cancermission.no/en/aktuelle-saker/2024/meeting-with-commissioner-kyriakides/

Meeting with Commissioner Kyriakides

On 15 April, the Norwegian Cancer Society's secretary general, Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross, met the EU commissioner responsible for health and food safety, Stella Kyriakides. Now the EU leader wants to visit Norway.

PUBLISHED 3 MAY 2024



CEO of Norwegian Cancer Society, Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross and EU Commissioner responsible for health and food safety, Stella Kyriakides, Brussels 15 April 2024

All images from the European Commission's audiovisual service

In 2019, the new health commissioner was tasked with turning over all stones in the fight against cancer, by commission president Ursula von der Leyen. Meanwhile, the pandemic raised health another notch up on the EU's agenda. The EU has now established a European health union which, in addition to fighting cancer, will ensure increased preparedness, access to medicines and the sharing of data.

With its own cancer plan and a societal mission on cancer, the EU has gained completely new tools in a joint European effort in the area of cancer.

In a hectic agenda, Stella Kyriakides found time for a meeting with the Cancer Society, which has been at the forefront of bringing together research and innovation environments, authorities and health organizations in Norway, in Cancer Mission Hub Norway . The Cancer Society wanted to emphasize the importance of the EU's efforts for everyone affected by cancer, and show how Norwegian communities are getting involved in the work.

The hub brings together the entire ecosystem with the aim that together we contribute to the EU investment also benefiting citizens and patients in Norway, said the Norwegian Cancer Society's secretary general. We are also involved in establishing such structures throughout Europe, through the EU project ECHoS.



A flagship for prevention

Kyriakides and her colleagues were impressed by how Norwegian actors have contributed so far in the initiative. They directed a special thank you to the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and the Directorate of Health, which together lead a large European collaboration to prevent cancer and other non-communicable diseases.

- There are many who want to participate in collaboration, but not so many who want to take on the great responsibility of coordinating and leading such large projects, said

Matthias Schuppe, team leader for the EU's cancer plan in the European Commission, who participated in the meeting on screen from Luxembourg .

With a budget of NOK one billion over four years, PreventNCD is one of the largest EU health projects ever.

Treatment of the highest quality for everyone in Europe

Another flagship in the EU's cancer plan is an inequality register, which shows large differences in incidence and survival in Europe.

- We are not doing this to single out countries and regions, but to direct our efforts towards the areas that need it most, said Kyriakides. We see that there are big differences between countries, but also within countries.

Giving patients across Europe access to the highest quality diagnostics and treatment is a key objective for the EU. This means, among other things, that 90 per cent of patients must have access to a so-called Comprehensive Cancer Center (CCC) by 2030. In Norway, the Cancer Clinic at Oslo University Hospital (OUS) is accredited as a CCC. OUS has contributed to the work to develop good models at European level , with funds from the EU investment.

Kyrikakides, who himself comes from Cyprus, emphasized how important the contribution from OUS is, not least for countries with few inhabitants, island communities and sparsely populated areas.

- We are very happy that Norway is taking such an active role here. You obviously have high quality diagnostics and treatment, and you have made great progress in precision medicine. At the same time, you are a small country, with scattered settlements, and thus share challenges with many others in Europe.

The cancer association's general secretary added that the hub has been concerned that the new national cancer strategy in Norway, which will apply from 2025-30, is in line with the EU's ambitions, also when it comes to equal access to highly specialized treatment for the entire population. - We want the efforts at European level to be

connected with national, regional and local initiatives, for the benefit of the patient, said Ross.



Quality of life for people affected by cancer

Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross also shared experiences from the hub's work about life after cancer treatment. -In the Cancer Association's user surveys, we see that the transition from hospital to municipality is difficult. Here the patient feels very alone. In the hub, we have facilitated local and regional mobilization of the communities that need to talk together to find good solutions.

- The community mission model helps us here, when hospitals, research environments, municipalities, patients and residents together develop tomorrow's cancer care, said Ingrid S. Ross.

This topic particularly engaged the commissioner, and she agreed with Ross that more measures were needed here. - We see it particularly with new treatment methods and personalized medicine. We cannot expect GPs to have an overview of the after effects the patient may have. Can we tailor training aimed at the primary

healthcare service on late effects, asked the commissioner, and passed the ball on to his colleagues in the Directorate-General.



Wants to go to Norway

In conclusion, Ingrid S. Ross invited the EU's health commissioner to Norway, in connection with the next top management meeting in Cancer Mission Hub Norway, which is planned for autumn 2024.

Stella Kyriakides agreed on the spot:

- The question is not *if* I will come, but *when* I will come to Norway! I always listen to the patient's voice, and would like to see more of how you together solve our joint mission on the ground in Norway.

- In that case, we are very much looking forward to welcoming you, said Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross on behalf of the Cancer Association and the hub.

Very inspiring meeting with the Norwegian... - Stella Kyriakides | Facebook

[Read Ingrid Stenstadvold Ross's post on LinkedIn from the meeting with the Commissioner here]

Messages at time of print 4 November 2026, 23:41 CET

No global messages displayed at time of print.