

**Resolution 2021 (2014)<sup>1</sup>**

Final version

## **Towards optimum breast cancer services across Europe**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Breast cancer is still the most common cancer among European women and has the highest mortality rate of any cancer among women, despite significant scientific advances in detection and treatment in the last 20 to 25 years.
2. Progress in fighting breast cancer – and the stigma still attached to the condition in some countries – has neither been linear nor universal across Europe, for many reasons. Access to quality screening programmes and modern treatment is not yet understood as a right throughout Europe, resulting in many women being subjected to unnecessary mutilating surgery and/or aggressive treatment.
3. Providing breast cancer services and care of guaranteed quality leads in the medium and long term to improved survival rates, to savings for the health-care system and to a better quality of life for patients. Placing the fight against breast cancer at the top of member countries' health agendas is thus not only in the interest of the individual patient.
4. The Parliamentary Assembly therefore recommends that Council of Europe member States:
  - 4.1. place the fight against breast cancer at the top of their health agendas;
  - 4.2. ensure that women have access to quality-controlled breast cancer screening programmes organised on a national level and set up in accordance with European guidelines, as well as to accurate, evidence-based information on the potential benefits and risks of participating in them, so that they can make an informed decision on their participation;
  - 4.3. ensure that all breast cancer patients have effective access, wherever their place of residence, to quality-assured diagnosis and treatment in multidisciplinary breast units, which work in co-operation with the national screening programmes set up in accordance with European guidelines and which encourage shared decision making between patients and medical teams;
  - 4.4. establish and maintain national cancer registries providing reliable data on the situation in the member States and task the registries with, *inter alia*, informing and raising awareness among the media and the general public of the proper interpretation of this data;
  - 4.5. outlaw any discrimination against breast cancer patients on the basis of their disease status, in particular with regard to employment and insurance;
  - 4.6. encourage researchers in all Council of Europe member and observer States to work together to further the understanding of the disease and to improve screening, diagnosis and treatment techniques in order to reduce mortality rates, improve the quality of life of individual patients, reduce overdiagnosis and overtreatment and, ultimately, find a cure for breast cancer.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 3 October 2014 (36th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13572](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Stella Kyriakides). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 3 October 2014 (36th Sitting).

