



**ESMO Statement  
for the  
156<sup>th</sup> WHO Executive Board Meeting  
3 February – 11 February 2025**

**Agenda item 18: Universal health and preparedness review**

Honorable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

[The European Society for Medical Oncology](#), representing more than 40,000 oncology professionals from 179 countries, urges Member States to include cancer prevention and control measures in their preparedness plans in order to ensure continuity of care to patients with cancer during emergencies.

Emergencies can disrupt cancer prevention and care services, and delays in primary prevention interventions, screening, diagnosis and treatment, disrupted care schedules, and an attendant backlog of cases increase the risk of mortality for patients with cancer. Such factors also cause psychological distress and can lead to increased financial toxicity due to the higher costs of delayed care.

We urge Member States to strengthen the resilience of secondary and tertiary care levels, where patients with cancer are predominately treated, and develop digital and telemedicine capabilities to enable continued care during physical access restrictions, as essential parts of their preparedness planning.

Thank you.