



Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: Launch of the European Cancer Imaging Initiative

Brussels, 23 January 2023

Today, at an [event](#) in Brussels, the Commission is launching the [European Cancer Imaging Initiative](#) to support healthcare providers, research institutes and innovators in making the best use of innovative data-driven solutions for cancer treatment and care. The initiative, a flagship action under [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#), will work towards creating a **digital infrastructure** linking up resources and databases of cancer imaging data across the EU, while ensuring adherence to high ethics standards, trust, security and protection of personal data. It will also connect EU-level and national initiatives, hospital networks, as well as research repositories with imaging data and other relevant health data.

Technological innovation that is combined with data protection can create a trusted framework for researchers, innovators, doctors, and patients. Thanks to the new European Cancer Imaging Initiative, **researchers** will have efficient access to more high-quality data to study and advance our understanding of the disease. **Innovators** will be able to develop and test data-driven solutions for cancer care. The facilitation of the development of data-driven solutions will allow **doctors** to make more precise and faster clinical decisions, diagnostics, treatments and predictive medicine, for the benefit of **cancer patients**. Furthermore, it will support data altruism from **citizens**, who could give their consent or permission voluntarily to make available data that they generate, as a way of enriching the health datasets.

A cross-border, interoperable, and secure infrastructure that will preserve privacy will speed up innovation in medical research. For example, it will be possible to train new technologies that use artificial intelligence (AI) on a large dataset, which is standardised and fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This will speed up the development of innovative tools, which can offer faster cancer diagnosis and improved personalised care.

Advancing health research and care with digital tech

In line with [the European Strategy for Data](#) and [the European Health Data Space](#), the European Cancer Imaging Initiative is one of the flagships of [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan \(EBCP\)](#). It will bring together digital technology innovation and European data protection to create a trusted and secure framework to give researchers, innovators and doctors access to valuable data.

Major European research organisations, institutions, and companies will work together to design the infrastructure that will:

- Give European clinicians, researchers and innovators **easy access to large amounts of cancer imaging data**;
- Support the **testing and development of tools for personalised medicine** to advance cancer diagnostics and treatments;
- Support the **creation of new, and the interoperability of existing, cancer image datasets**, in line with the European Strategy for Data.

Next Steps

Following today's launch of the European Cancer Imaging Initiative with two projects, the [EUCAIM](#) project and the [AI Testing and Experimentation Facility for Health](#) (TEF-Health), it is expected that by December 2023 the design of the pan-European digital infrastructure will have been completed and the collaboration mechanisms will have been established. Data providers will then be able to connect with this new European federated platform. The first version of the platform will be released by the end of 2024 and the final release is expected by the end of 2025. The digital infrastructure will be fully operational and running in 2026.

Background

The EUCAIM project that is under the [European Cancer Imaging Initiative](#) is supported by the [Digital Europe Programme](#) (DIGITAL) with €18 million. It is a large-scale project that will deploy the federated European infrastructure of cancer imaging data based on the work accomplished under the “[AI for Health Imaging Network](#)”, which is a cluster of 5 projects supported by the Horizon 2020 research programme. The infrastructure aims to include more than 100,000 cancer cases by 2025, and at least 60 million annotated cancer images in a distributed Atlas of cancer images. The project is starting with 21 clinical sites from 12 countries and aims to have at least 30 distributed data providers from 15 countries.

The cancer imaging data will be made available to the [TEF-Health](#), established under the DIGITAL programme. This will allow small and medium-sized businesses who have developed artificial intelligence solutions for cancer care to test them in real-life environments. Other testing facilities will also be considered.

Furthermore, the [European Digital Innovation Hubs](#) under the DIGITAL Programme will support the rollout of the technologies relevant for the initiative. They will inform the innovators about the legal requirements and testing facilities available to them. They will also provide a range of services to digital solution users and providers, such as test-before-invest services, training and networking opportunities as well as access to finances.

For More Information

[Video of Commissioner Breton - European Cancer Imaging Initiative event](#)

[Video of Commissioner Kyriakides - European Cancer Imaging Initiative event](#)

[European Cancer Imaging Initiative](#)

[Factsheet: European Cancer Imaging Initiative](#)

[Factsheet: Europe's Beating Cancer Plan – where are we now?](#)

[EU policy on cancer](#)

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Quotes:

Today, we start building the tools to help doctors and researchers makes strides in fighting cancer. With innovative data-driven solutions it will be possible to support improved diagnosis and better patient care.
Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age - 23/01/2023

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence are key in our battle against cancer. The driver behind these technologies is high-quality data. With the European Cancer Imaging Initiative, we will unlock a wealth of data and transform it into innovative cancer care solutions. SMEs and start-ups will play an important role. Our new Testing and Experimentation Facility for AI in healthcare will help them test their data-driven innovations in real-life conditions.
Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market - 23/01/2023

The Cancer Imaging initiative will provide vital information for the next generation of cancer diagnostics and treatment and help us make screening more precise, timely and accessible. It is a key example of how we invest and make the best use of the potential of innovative digital solutions under Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan to change the realities for cancer patients and their families.
Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety - 23/01/2023

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