



UfM on World Cancer Day – 4 February, 2018

## **Promoting early screening for cervical and breast cancer is key to save thousands of women’s lives in the region**

- **Cervical and breast cancer are one of the leading causes of mortality amongst women, globally.**
- **In the Euro-Mediterranean region, approximately 192,000 women die every year because of cervical and breast cancer. Prevention and early screening are critical to prevent this type of cancer and save thousands of women’s lives in the region.**
- **The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) partner to promote cervical and breast cancer prevention and early screening through the project “Women’s Right to Health (WoRTH)”.**

**1 February, 2018.** The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) are engaged to promote cervical and breast cancer prevention and early screening through the project [“Women’s Right to Health \(WoRTH\)”](#), as part of the UfM Women’s Empowerment Agenda. The project, implemented by the Centre for Cancer Prevention of Piedmont, in Italy, as WHO Collaborating Centre for Cancer Early Diagnosis and Screening (CPO/WHOCC), aims at supporting UfM Member States to **develop national plans to increase access to services to prevent and manage women cancers such as cervical and breast cancer. Morocco, Albania and Montenegro have already started with national pilot projects.** In the framework of the project, **over 45,000 disadvantaged women (aged 25-65) are expected to be tested for cervical and breast cancer** and sensitized to the risks and the importance of cervical and breast cancer prevention. **More than 300 health professionals** involved in the early detection/screening programs **will be trained.**

*“Cancer affects everyone in different ways. Combining worldwide and regional efforts and mobilising networks with a view to sharing knowledge and experiences is crucial to prevent cervical and breast cancer. The UfM is determined to build synergies in the field of women’s empowerment, including access to health, in order to facilitate stakeholders dialogue and cooperation and promote specific projects such as WoRTH”,* said Laurence Païs, UfM Deputy Secretary General.

The UfM joins efforts with the World Health Organisation, the CPO/WHOCC and the Ministry of Health of Morocco to promote women’s rights to early cervical and cancer screening during a **regional workshop** that will be held on **5 April 2017 in Marrakech** under the framework of the *Conference of the Pan-Arabian Research Society of Gynaecological Oncology (PARSGO)*. About 50 participants will represent the ministries of health of the Mediterranean countries, national, regional and international stakeholders and experts in the field of cancer prevention. The meeting will provide the opportunity to strengthen the network of cancer prevention in the region; identify specific means of stakeholders’ engagement at the local, regional and international levels; share experience and best practices, as well as assess the possibility of involving additional countries from the region in the project.

Breast cancer is the most frequent cancer among women, impacting over 1.5 million women each year, and also causes the greatest number of cancer-related deaths among women, according to the World Health Organization. Likewise, an estimated 528,000 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer worldwide in 2012, half of whom died from the disease. In the UfM Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, more than 19,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 212,600 with breast cancer every year, while 7,800 and 62,200 respectively die. In the EU-28, breast and cervical cancer’s mortality predictions for the year 2017 were estimated at 122,000 women.



Public health measures such as the establishment of cancer prevention and early detection programs - *through increased cervical and breast cancer screening, education programs promoting healthier lifestyles, and the introduction of HPV tests and vaccination-* are critical to reduce global cancer disparities, particularly among women in Mediterranean countries.

#### More information

- **Project's web page:** [Women's Right to Health \(WoRTH\)](#)
- **Policy Framework:** The UfM strategic priority to enhance the role of women in Euro-Mediterranean societies is an effort to contribute to the long-term sustainable development of the region and women's empowerment which is an essential precondition for the prevention and control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) among women. The [UfM Ministerial declaration](#) as of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in Cairo, Egypt promotes a comprehensive action plan for women empowerment in the Mediterranean region for the coming years.

#### The Union for the Mediterranean: building bridges for the future

**The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** is the intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation that brings together all 28 countries of the European Union and 15 countries from the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. The UfM provides a forum to enhance regional cooperation and dialogue, as well as the implementation of concrete projects and initiatives with tangible impact on the citizens, with an emphasis on young people, in order to address the three strategic objectives of the region: stability, human development and integration.

**The Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean** is the platform to operationalise decisions taken by the Member States, implementing strategic regional projects through a specific methodology based on dynamic multi-partner networks and the exchange of best practices and innovative tools: **more than 50 regional projects labelled by the Member States worth over €5 billion**, mainly in the areas of inclusive growth, youth employability, women empowerment, student mobility, sustainable urban development and climate action.

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