

# The 3rd Forum of the Regional Cervical Cancer Prevention Alliance

FOR EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

28 - 29 September 2023 • Tbilisi, Georgia

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## Call to Action to Eliminate Cervical Cancer in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

We, the participants of the 3rd Annual Forum of the Regional Alliance for Cervical Cancer Prevention in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, representing governments, academic and technical institutions, civil society, professional societies and the private sector from 17 countries and territories across the region:

1. Express our concern about the high number of new cases of cervical cancer in the region, estimated at 32,000 per year, and the high number of deaths caused by the disease, estimated at 16,000 per year;
2. Emphasize that most cases of cervical cancer are preventable, and that the high incidence in the region is due to limited access to the HPV vaccination, lack of effective organized cervical screening programmes and low screening participation, and limited availability of modern technologies for screening and treatment, as well as the lack of sustainable funding and national capacities to implement nationwide programmes for the elimination of cervical cancer;
3. Recognise the importance of accelerating actions to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health issue in Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
4. Acknowledge the importance of implementing the [Global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem](#), endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2020, as well as the UNFPA [Regional Strategy](#) to Eliminate Cervical Cancer in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

## We pledge our commitment to work together to:

5. Advance evidence- and rights-based policies and programmes for the elimination of cervical cancer in the countries and territories of Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
6. Ensure cervical cancer prevention is prioritized in national policies, strategies and public health programmes;
7. Advocate for the introduction of national HPV vaccination programmes and organized HPV primary screening programmes where they have not yet been implemented;
8. Advocate for sustainable state financing for HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, treatment and palliative care programmes;
9. Mobilize national and regional expertise and public-private partnerships to strengthen national health systems to ensure cervical cancer prevention and care services are accessible, effective and high-quality for all in need;
10. Strengthen the quality of training programmes for health care providers who are involved in any aspect of cervical cancer prevention to ensure they have the knowledge

and skills to effectively support HPV vaccination and cervical cancer screening, treatment and palliative care programmes;

11. Strengthen the participation of CSOs in the delivery of awareness-raising and public education programmes that will empower girls and women to utilize cervical cancer prevention services, and that will eventually increase demand for HPV vaccination and cervical cancer screening, and eliminate taboos and misconceptions;
12. Strengthen intersectoral cooperation at the national, regional and global level and support in the development and introduction of innovative solutions and technologies for the prevention and treatment of cervical cancer;
13. Advance professional networking and south-south and triangular cooperation for knowledge exchange to mutually reinforce cervical cancer prevention programmes and maximize their impact in the region;
14. Coordinate our efforts both within countries and across the region to maximize progress towards achieving the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem within the region.

### **We call upon:**

15. Political leaders in all countries and territories of Eastern Europe and Central Asia to prioritize cervical cancer prevention through HPV vaccination and HPV primary screening, and to provide the resources that are required to implement effective, high-quality programmes with high coverage;
16. Civil society organizations and community leaders to implement health education, awareness-raising and community mobilization programmes to increase uptake of HPV vaccination and HPV primary screening programmes;
17. Academia to cooperate with national authorities to strengthen national institutional capacities and local expertise for cervical cancer prevention;
18. UN and other intergovernmental organizations to strengthen interagency cooperation and support to cervical cancer prevention programmes in the region, advocating for increased and equal access to cervical cancer prevention and treatment programmes, leaving no one behind;
19. The private sector to support innovative approaches for increasing access to, and affordability of, effective technologies and products in the region;
20. The private sector to work closely with civil society organizations, academia and governments, and support actions and programmes that facilitate the implementation and optimization of HPV vaccination and HPV primary screening programmes.

We recognize that it is only by working together and coordinating our activities that we will be able to make cervical cancer a story of the past and ensure the well-being of all women and girls, no matter where they live.