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# **MEPs from France, Germany, Ireland and Portugal Form New Executive of Pan-European Political Network to Stop Cervical Cancer**



Brussels: 12 October 2009

The Europe-wide network of 250 national and European politicians, Politicians for Cervical Cancer Prevention (PCCP), today announced the appointment of Ms Edite Estrela MEP, Ms Marian Harkin MEP and Dr Silvana Koch-Mehrin MEP & Vice-President of the European Parliament who will join the sitting co-chair Ms Françoise Grossetete MEP on the new executive board. The new Co-Chairs of the PCCP bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in health policy development, law and politics to the direction of the PCCP.

Cervical cancer is unique in we already have the tools available to prevent almost every case of this disease. Effective organised cervical cancer screening programmes can prevent 80% of cervical cancer cases. In addition, new technologies such as vaccination against the virus that causes cervical cancer, the Human Papilloma Virus or HPV, offer the potential to further reduce rates, perhaps to the point that cervical cancer could be virtually eliminated in Europe. The objective of the PCCP is to see that these programmes are implemented quickly and equitably across Europe.

The first task of the new executive is to plan and hold the European Cervical Cancer Summit Meeting that will bring politicians from across Europe together in Brussels on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2010. This meeting will provide European political leaders with up-to-the-minute, evidence-based information on cervical cancer prevention that can be taken back to their countries to facilitate effective health policy formulation.

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## **About the Politicians for Cervical Cancer Prevention (PCCP):**

The PCCP was established in 2006 specifically to raise awareness of cervical prevention within the parliaments of Europe. The PCCP started with 40 Members of the European Parliament but quickly expanded to include more than 250 politicians from 36 different European countries.

The PCCP works to educate politicians and public health officials about cervical cancer so they can make evidence-based decisions about the implementation of cost-effective prevention programmes. In keeping with this objective, the PCCP has successfully organised many educational events across Europe, including the highly acclaimed European Cervical Cancer Summit Meetings that have been held in Brussels for the past 3 years. The 3rd European Cervical Cancer Summit Meeting was held on 24 January 2009 in the European Parliament and it attracted 150 politicians from across Europe.

The PCCP is now planning the 4th European Cervical Cancer Summit Meeting that will again be held in the European Parliament on 26-27 January 2010. Further details can be found on the PCCP secretariat's website at [www.ecca.info](http://www.ecca.info).

## About the Executive of the PCCP:

### Ms Edite Estrela:



Ms Estrela was first elected to the Portuguese Parliament in 1988 and she served until 1994. She was then elected as Mayor of the Sintra Municipality (1994-2002). In 2002, Ms Estrela was re-elected to the Portuguese Parliament and served until 2004. In 2004, Ms Estrela was elected to the EP and was then re-elected for a second term in 2009.

Since entering the EP, Ms Estrela has been actively involved in health issues, serving as a Member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and as Vice-President of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality for her entire EP career. She has also been a strong supporter of the PCCP, the European Cervical Cancer Association and the European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week at both the European level and in Portugal.

For further information:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert/committees/view.do?language=EN&id=28310>

### Ms Françoise Grossetête:



Ms Grossetête was first elected to the EP in 1994 as a member of the Parti Populaire Européen (PPE). Ms Grossetête has been actively involved in health issues since entering the EP when she was appointed as the PPE's Vice-Coordinator to the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. In recognition of her substantial achievements in the EP, Ms Grossetête was re-elected in 1999, 2004 and 2009, and has remained on the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety throughout her EP career.

Continuing her involvement in health issues, Ms Grossetête was one of the founding chairs of the PCCP and has been instrumental the successes of this organisation over the past three years. She has also been a strong supporter of the European Cervical Cancer Association and particularly with the implementation of the European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week both across Europe and in France where she has helped to raise awareness of the importance of cervical cancer prevention among the general public.

For further information: <http://www.francoise-grossetete.eu/>

### Ms Marian Harkin:



Ms Harkin was first elected to the Irish Parliament in 2002, receiving the highest number of first preference votes in the constituency. She was then elected to the European Parliament (EP) in 2004 and retired her Irish Parliament seat in 2007 to concentrate on her European duties. In recognition of her substantial achievements in the EP, she was re-elected in the 2009 election. Ms Harkin has been actively involved in the activities of the PCCP and the European Cervical Cancer Association, helping to raise the priority of cervical cancer prevention within parliaments across Europe. She has also been a strong

supporter of the European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week at the European level and in Ireland where she has worked closely with the ECCA's Irish members to raise awareness within the general public.

For further information: <http://www.marianharkin.com/>

### Dr Silvana Koch-Mehrin:



Ms Koch-Mehrin brought her party, the German FDP, back into the European Parliament in 2004. Then she was re-elected in 2009 as head of the list for the FDP when she increased their vote by more than 80%. Ms Koch-Mehrin served as the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of the ALDE group in the 2004-9 parliament when she focused her activities on communications, budgetary matters and transparency. Through her experience and professional expertise, Ms Koch-Mehrin took a particular interest in the European Parliament's information and communication policy and participated on various working

groups leading up to the launch of the Europarl webtv channel and European election campaign project. As Vice-President of the European Parliament and one of the new co-chairs of the PCCP, Ms Koch-Mehrin will focus her attention on raising awareness of cervical cancer prevention across Europe.

For further information: <http://www.koch-mehrin.de/>

## About cervical cancer

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women worldwide with 500,000 women developing cervical cancer and 250,000 dying from it every year<sup>1</sup>. This disease is also an important public health issue in Europe where 60,000 women develop and 30,000 die from it every year.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most important things to remember about cervical cancer is that we already know how to prevent almost every case. Effective organised cervical cancer screening programmes can prevent 80% of cervical cancer cases.<sup>3</sup> In addition, new technologies such as vaccination against the virus that causes cervical cancer, the Human Papilloma Virus or HPV, offer the potential to reduce disease rates even further, perhaps to the point that cervical cancer could be virtually eliminated in Europe.

Therefore, the research has been done and the battle against cervical cancer has now moved to the political arena. What we need now is to raise the priority of cervical cancer prevention among politicians and public-health officials to ensure proper organised cervical cancer prevention programmes are put in place without further delay.

1. GLOBOCAN 2000: Cancer Incidence, Mortality and Prevalence Worldwide, Version 1.0. IARC CancerBase No. 5. Lyon, IARC Press, 2001
2. Cancer incidence and mortality in Europe, 2004. Ann Oncol. 2005;16:481-8
3. Cervix cancer screening. (IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention. Volume 10) IARC Press, Lyon 2005

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