



Dear Madam/Sir,

we take the liberty of inviting you to the 4th European Colorectal Cancer Days (ECCD) conference which will be held on 29–30 May 2015 in Brno, Czech Republic.

This year's conference continues in a tradition of international meetings that focus on one of the biggest health challenges in Europe – colorectal cancer (CRC). Although significant progress in prevention and screening was made over the last few years, CRC remains to be the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second most common cause of cancer deaths in Europe.

The past events were primarily focused on sharing experience with CRC screening among European countries. The conference was also dedicated to enforcing standardised CRC screening programmes; this was particularly important for the Czech Republic, where the ongoing programme was not supported by personalised invitations of citizens. The ECCD conference might have contributed to the launch of personalised invitations of Czech citizens to cancer screening programmes in 2014; in particular, the CRC screening programme got a chance to boost the participation rate significantly.

Among others, the fourth year of the conference will evaluate the experience with the introduction of proactive invitations of Czech citizens to the ongoing CRC screening programme. We truly believe that this retrospect will be interesting not only for Czech conference participants. Data obtained so far suggest that the screening programme has become much stronger, starting to have an impact on epidemiological trends for CRC in the Czech Republic. However, the boosted screening programme has also shown some weaknesses, which might become interesting topics for discussion in an international comparison. As prevention programmes in various European countries are still rather variable, the following topics are certainly relevant and interesting not only for physicians and researchers, but also for patients and policymakers:

- **Equal access to CRC prevention.** Why do we still observe significant regional differences in screening performance? To what extent are the programme organisation and the infrastructure of provided care involved? Or are we witnessing social or other discrimination of a certain part of the population?
- **Convincing promotion.** Are we successful at addressing and convincing the target population to participate in CRC screening? What models of promotion and support for population-based screening have been adopted in European countries? Can available data be used to track down common errors in the communication?
- **Effective control and respecting the feedback from data.** Over the last few years, a significant progress was made in terms of CRC screening standardisation. The question remains whether the control of standards is consistent enough. What role do policymakers and health care payers play in this process?
- **What is the cost of screening?** Why is a comprehensive informational support for the evaluation of economic aspects of CRC prevention still non-existent? Are we lacking data?
- **Screening is not the end of care provided to patients.** Are we capable of providing an adequately fast and effective treatment to patients detected by screening? Is the health care capacity sufficient to meet the programme's outcomes?

In 2015, hardly anyone can doubt that very efficient tools for an early detection of CRC are available. The above-mentioned questions aim to strengthen the screening programme and to achieve its highest effectiveness possible. We hope that the fourth meeting of stakeholders supported by representatives of medical societies, patients' organisations, research institutions and policymakers will again offer a functional platform and a stimulating atmosphere for fruitful discussions about all of the above-mentioned issues.

We believe that you find these issues interesting and that we will have the opportunity to welcome you among the ECCD 2015 participants. More information about this conference, including registration, is available at www.crcprevention.eu.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Brno, Czech Republic, on 29–30 May 2015.

RNDr. Pavel POC
Member of the European Parliament
Head of the Kolorektum.cz Initiative

prof. MUDr. Miroslav Zavoral, Ph.D.
Head of the Board of Czech Colorectal
National Cancer Screening Programme

doc. RNDr. Ladislav Dušek, Ph.D.
Chair of ECCD 2015 Programme and
Organising Committee