

EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF ONCOLOGY PHARMACY

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EU Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Hamburg, April 7th 2021

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

Your decision in Parliament has made a great success possible for those of us who are multi-professional in the treatment of cancer patients.

It is well known that those who manufacture or administer cancer drugs in a patient-friendly manner run the risk of coming into contact with these drugs and may even develop cancer themselves.

Falck, K. et al. presented this to the public in 1979, 40 years ago, in their pioneering study (1). In recent years, pharmacies in particular, which have increasingly taken on the preparation of patient-specific infusions, have been concerned with issues of occupational safety. Unfortunately, attempts have been made to misinterpret or redirect these efforts in a number of ways.

On the one hand, the PICS guidelines placed the emphasis on hygienic production, which required an almost industrial standard for individual individual recipes. In many ways it led to the disability of near-patient care and made industrial production the norm.

On the other hand, industry-driven forces tried to isolate the handling of cancer drugs from the process of production and administration, and to separate the pharmaceutical service from its form and content with a promise of universal safety by using their plastic parts.

In considering how the EU can best support steps to protect workers from cytotoxic exposure, the need for an appropriate approach should be highlighted.

It is well known that the most expensive solutions are not always the best, which is why we particularly point out the need for education, training, clarification and good work processes.

The EU Parliament countered the plan to ignore the guiding function of work processes with its resolution by emphasizing the importance of the entire process chain and wanting to have it checked in an independent study under the auspices of the Commission.

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We thank you for your efforts to enable a rational discussion, which will not only lead to more protection for all affected employees, but also to relieve the regional and local health budgets. We are confident that we can serve to achieve this goal in two ways:

- Firstly, by making available our collective knowledge, which has been gained on the basis of long-term independent research.
- Secondly, through the implementation of standardized training for all employees in pharmacies who handle cytostatics in order to guarantee a similar level of quality in all EU member states.

The recognition of this specialization program with the name EUSOP (European Specialization in Oncology Pharmacy) by all responsible European authorities would sustainably promote this process.

The European Society for Oncological Pharmacy would like to draw your attention to your national contact point for oncological pharmacy in Germany, the DGOP and their perspective on cytotoxic safety. We will be happy to talk to you about such matters at any time. More information here: <http://www.dgop.org/>

We would be happy to provide you with further information on the exposure of health professionals to cytostatics in Germany and the safety measures taken there. This includes, for example, our active participation in the overarching efforts of the European Society for Oncology Pharmacy on topics such as common European standards for training and safety procedures in oncology pharmacy. Further information here: <https://esop.li/>

We trust that we can continue to rely on your active support in questions of oncology pharmacy in the European Parliament and elsewhere in the future.

Yours sincerely

Klaus Meier (President)