

The creation of the European Cancer Prevention Organization (ECP)

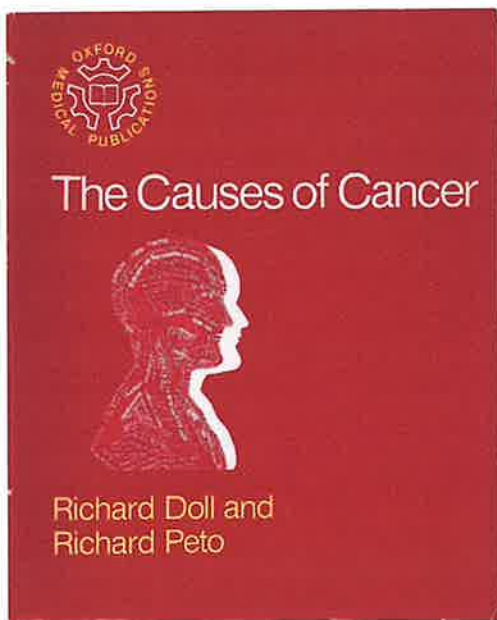
Alain P. Maskens, M.D., Ph.D.

October 2021

The creation of the European Cancer Prevention Organization (ECP)

ECP was created in 1981.

The knowledge about human cancer causation and prevention in 1981 is well documented in a report published that year by Richard Doll and Richard Peto from the University of Oxford. The report was prepared at the request of the Office of Technology Assessment of the US Congress. In their summary, they wrote:



“Where possible, an estimate is made of the percentage of current U.S. cancer mortality that might have been caused or avoided by life-style and other environmental factors. These estimates are based chiefly on evidence from epidemiology, as the available evidence from animal and other laboratory studies cannot provide reliable human risk assessments. By far the largest reliably known percentage is the 30% of current U.S. cancer deaths that are due to tobacco, although it is possible that some nutritional factor(s) may eventually be found to be of comparable importance. The percentage of U.S. cancer deaths that are due to tobacco is still increasing, and must be expected to continue to increase for some years yet due to the delayed effects of the adoption of cigarettes in earlier decades. ... The proportion of current U.S. cancer deaths attributed to occupational factors is provisionally estimated as 4% (lung cancer being the major contributor to this).”

Their work reinforced the view already held by others that “lifestyle” factors could be related to the risk of 60% or more of all human cancers, thus offering hope that many cancers could be actually prevented. This would however require additional research – except for tobacco where, for the majority of scientists, the case for the link between tobacco and cancer risk was settled.

In 1981, I was working half time as a medical oncologist. This led me to recognize that progress in that field was important, but that chemotherapy was always a very difficult experience for the patients. As we used to say, for the patient, a cancer prevented is hugely better than a successfully treated cancer.

In my other half time, I was involved in research on experimental colon carcinogenesis, a topic directly related to understanding the causes of cancer and the potential for prevention.

As an oncologist, I was active in the European Organization for Research on Treatment of Cancer (EORTC), as secretary of the Cooperative Group for the Study of Ovarian Cancer. EORTC was an early and very efficient model of wide European co-operation in medical research, where thematic groups with members from the various European countries would agree on common research protocols and



contribute patients in their common multicentric studiesⁱ. Please note that, at that time, the European Union had no competency in matters of public health or medicine.

With this background, it became obvious to me that European investigators should also start uniting efforts towards exploring ways to prevent human cancer. I circulated a document proposing to create a small organization able to achieve three main goals:

- to PROMOTE research in cancer prevention;
- to ORGANIZE an active cooperation at the European level in the field of cancer prevention;
- to INFORM the medical profession and the public of significant progresses in the field of cancer prevention.

After wide exchanges with several colleagues and with the representatives of major cancer organizations, it became clear that times were ripe to organize such a cooperative effort.

Several experts agreed to form together a scientific committee responsible for defining the project priorities, methods and structures. The Committee held its first meeting in Brussels on December 11 and 12, 1981. In addition to its internal discussions, the Committee held a public round table session on "Cancer prevention: from theories of carcinogenesis to preventive programs."

The participants included:

- Dr. Guy Blaudin de Thé (Lyon),
- Dr. Franco Conte (Genova),
- Dr. Daniela Daniele (Torino),
- Prof. Pierre Dellenbach (Strasbourg),
- Dr. Lajos Döbrössy (WHO Europe),
- Dr. Peter Ebbesen (Aarhus),
- Dr. Jean Faivre (Dijon),
- Mr. Pierre Jeandrain (Brussels),
- Prof. Joseph V. Joossens (Leuven),
- Mrs Cristina Kettlitz (Milano),
- Prof. Paul Mainguet (Louvain),
- Prof. Franz Oesch (Mainz),
- Prof. Marcel Roberfroid (Louvain),
- Prof. Leonardo Santi (Genova),
- Prof. James Scott (Leeds),
- Mrs Martine Van Glabbeke (EORTC),
- Prof. Jean-Pierre Wolff (Villejuif).

Dr. Andy Haines (Harrow) and Dr. Richard Peto (Oxford) couldn't attend but sent scientific contributions or suggestions.

E.C.P.
**EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR COOPERATION
IN CANCER PREVENTION STUDIES**

DURING THE 1st MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF
E.C.P., **A ROUND TABLE SESSION** WILL BE DEVOTED TO :

**« CANCER PREVENTION
FROM THEORIES OF CARCINOGENESIS
TO PREVENTIVE PROGRAMS »**

INVITED SPEAKERS :

P.F. Conte (Genova), P. Dellenbach (Strasbourg), G. de The
(Lyon), L. Döbrössy (WHO), P. Ebbesen (Aarhus), J. Faivre (Dijon),
P. Herzog (Mainz), A.P. Haines (Harrow), J.V. Joossens (Leuven),
P. Mainguet (Louvain), A.P. Maskens (ECP), F. Oesch (Mainz),
M. Robertroid (Louvain), L. Santi (Genova), J. Scott (Leeds), M. Van
Glabbeke (EORTC), J.P. Wolff (Villejuif)

DATE : FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 14.00 - 18.30

Location : BRUSSELS Continental Bank, 227, rue de la Loi, 1040 Brussels

Members of Medical Profession are welcome to attend

THIS FIRST MEETING HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY A SPECIAL GRANT
FROM CONTINENTAL BANK S.A., A SUBSIDIARY OF CONTINENTAL
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INFORMATION : E.C.P. - AVENUE LAMBEAU 62 - B-1200 BRUSSELS TEL.(02) 735.11.15



At the meeting, I presented a summary of the views and discussions which had led to the launch of this initiative. It is interesting to read it again forty years later:

The first aim of ECP is to promote European cooperation in cancer prevention studies. This aim is thus based on three implicit statements: cancer is a theoretically preventable disease; we now have the necessary knowledge to start testing preventive measures; Europe has the scientific potential to play a leading role in this field.

Is cancer a preventable disease? The answer to this question came from epidemiological analyses of time trends in cancer mortality. The rate of stomach cancer, the number one killer 30 years ago, has now been reduced by more than 40% in most European countries. Dietary habits have been modified over this period, and epidemiologists are actively looking for changes that might be causally associated with such a decline (see the papers by Döbrössy, and by Joossens). The "a contrario" demonstration came from the observation that the incidence of human lung cancer rose more than tenfold following a dramatic increase in our smoking habits. Thus, cancer incidence can be, and has been, altered by appropriate manipulation of man's environment.

Has our knowledge progressed to the point where we can imagine and test preventive measures? The answer again is "yes". Cancer research has, in the last few years, accumulated an incredibly rich harvest of crucial information. Molecular biologists have described how viruses or chemicals can interact with DNA, and geneticists have traced chromosomal defects specifically related with human cancers. Laboratory investigators can induce experimentally almost any type of tumor; drugs have been tested which can effectively counteract chemical carcinogenesis in animals; modulations of cancer incidence can be obtained following specific dietary or hormonal treatments. Epidemiologists have reported information on possible causative or promoting factors for most human cancers. Clinicians have developed new techniques allowing precancerous conditions in practically any site of the human body to be observed and analyzed.

The time has thus arrived when we can go one step further and test the most solid hypotheses in terms of preventive strategies. For it is true that, with the exception of the reduction in tobacco consumption, no definite recommendation can yet be made to the general public. Preventive oncology will thus mainly concern itself with progress in the knowledge of human cancer aetiology, and ways of decreasing its incidence. Specific, and perhaps, new tools will have to be developed. We can cite, for instance, large scale prospective surveys of populations exposed to different levels of suspected carcinogens, prospective follow up studies of high risk groups, registries of cancer-prone families, biological sample banks, and, eventually, prospective randomized testing of possible protective measures.

Obviously, such approaches will require a lot of energy, enthusiasm, skill, patience, determination, and, most of all, active cooperation. Cooperation amongst fundamentalists, epidemiologists, and clinicians; cooperation amongst regions and countries. This last point is most important. In fact, the European countries probably represent the highest concentration of medical and scientific staff, hospitals, and laboratories in the world. All we now need is to concentrate and coordinate efforts so as to make optimal use of the information which is already at hand or could be accessed without further progress or expense in our technological means.

ECP will thus in essence represent a human investment. Time and money will be devoted first to getting people together so as to progressively build cooperative research programs, based on fast and accurate exchange of standardized information. Similar efforts have already been pioneered by international bodies such as WHO and UICC, which have already made significant contributions in this field, as well as by several isolated groups of investigators. ECP wishes to help increase this effort by specifically promoting such an approach within the geographical context of Europe. And it is certainly not pure coincidence that another European body was born almost simultaneously with ECP, namely, a European Federation of the National Anti-Cancer Leagues. Our efforts will be complementary to theirs, with ECP coordinating research, and the Federation coordinating public campaigns. A similar complementarity and concertation will be sought with the EORTC, which, already in 1962, introduced in Europe the concept of cooperative research groups, in the related field of cancer therapy.

During the day that followed the round table session, the attending scientists held discussions about methods and priorities. These discussions were led by Prof. James Scott (Leeds), who became the first chairman of the ECP Scientific Committee.



Prof. James Scott (Leeds)



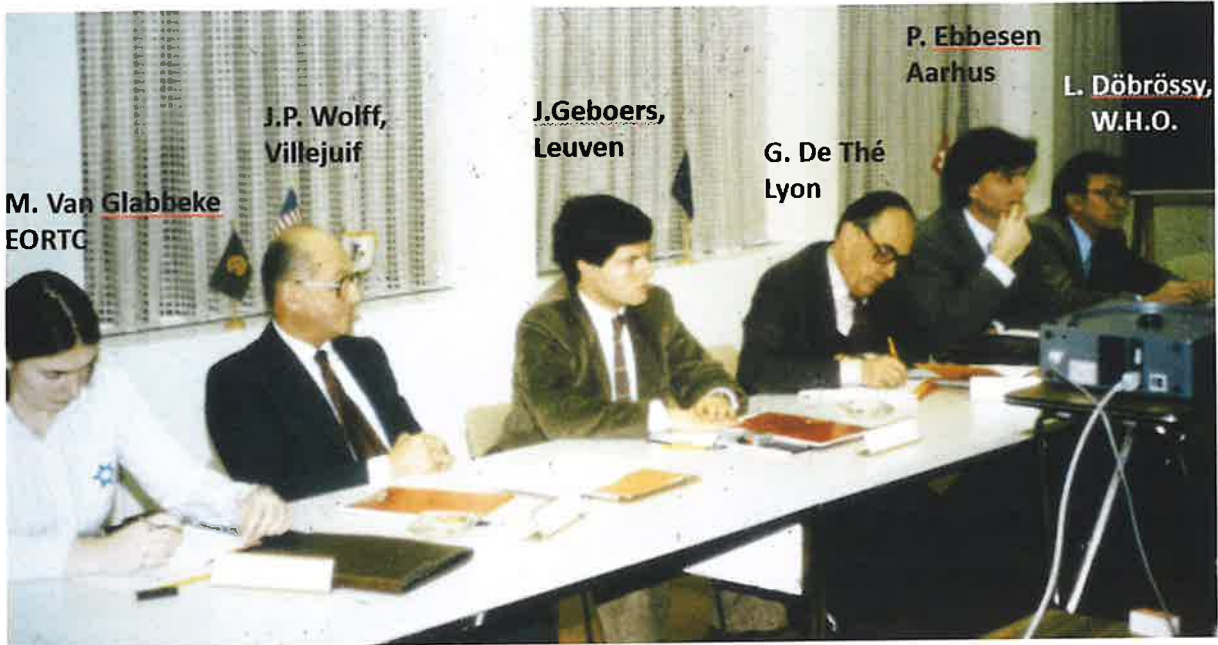
**L. Santi,
Genova**

**P.F. Conte,
Genova**

**J.V. Joossens,
Leuven**

**J. Faivre,
Dijon**

**M. Roberfroid
Louvain**



The main points which came out of this session were:

- emphasis should be on primary prevention rather than cancer detection,
- ECP should function on active involvement of individuals rather than official representation of institutions,
- active coordination should be sought with WHO and other international organizations,
- the information of the public was of central importance and should be fully integrated with the research programs.

At this point, it was decided to create six working groups, and a coordinator was selected for each: Tobacco and Cancer (M. Roberfroid), Diet and Cancer (J. Joossens), Sexual Factors and Cancer (J. Scott), Colon Cancer (J. Faivre), Breast Cancer (P. Dellenbach), Public Information (P. Jeandrain). I received the responsibility of coordinating the project, as first medical coordinator.

In the months that followed, a legal ECP entity was created for managing the administrative aspects of the organization. The working groups started accruing members, and preparing joint research projects. A first symposium was organized in march 1983, soon to be followed by others on an annual basis.

In retrospect, one can state that the December 1981 meeting was the founding event of ECP. It was made possible owing to the enthusiastic and generous support and participation of many European scientists, most of whom have been mentioned here above. They deserve our respect and gratitude.ⁱⁱ

I cannot close this story without mentioning a second major event which occurred 10 years later, in October 1991: the launch of the European Journal of Cancer Prevention, the official journal of ECP. This major achievement was led by Dr. Michael Hill, who had by then replaced James Scott as Chairman of the ECP Scientific Committee, and by Dr. Attilio Giacosa, who had replaced me as medical coordinator of ECP. They also deserve our thanks and appreciation. My deepest gratitude also goes to Prof. Jaak Janssens, current Chairman of ECP and editor of the Journal.

Alain P. Maskens , M.D., PH.D.
October 1st, 2021

Reference

Doll R, Peto R (1981). The Causes of Cancer: Quantitative Estimates of Avoidable Risks of Cancer in the United States Today. *J Natl Cancer Inst* 66:1192-1308.

ⁱ At that time, the European Union was composed of only 10 member countries. The European Commission had no competency in matters of public health or medicine. Therefore, no official funding was available for supporting European cooperative projects in the fields of cancer therapy or cancer prevention.

ⁱⁱ ECP would not exist without the major role played behind the scenes by Mr. Pierre Jeandrain, who offered his skills as organizer and his expertise in public relations to support the early years of ECP, including the organization of the initial Scientific Committee meeting, as well as to search efficiently for financial support. The first chairman of the legal entity was Mr. Bernard Jamoulle, a Belgian lawyer. Mrs. Chantal Cattoir soon became the manager of the administrative office, with the efficient support of Mrs. Rosemary Tuck. They all offered much appreciated time and effort for the success of ECP.

Appendices :

- 1. The initial document written by Dr. A.P. Maskens describing the proposed ECP project (version of October 1981)**
- 2. Correspondence and contacts of Dr. A.P. Maskens with various scientists and organizations about the ECP project**
- 3. Minutes of the first meeting of the ECP Scientific Advisory Committee, Brussels, December 11-12, 1981**

**Appendix 1. The initial document written by Dr. A.P. Maskens
describing the proposed ECP project (version of October 1981)**

PROJECT :

"EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN CANCER PREVENTION" (E.C.C.P.)

October 1981

PROJECT :
"EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN CANCER PREVENTION" (E.C.C.P.)

I. THE PROBLEM

- Cancer mortality represents in our countries the second cause of death, immediately following cardiovascular diseases. In Western Europe, malignancies will claim in 1981 more than half a million lives.

- It is now a prevalent opinion that 80% or more of all cancers are caused by modifications of the environment often related to individual life-style : smoking and nutritional habits essentially. In addition, the role of occupational and environmental carcinogens is being given increasing recognition. It follows then that cancer is essentially a preventable disease.

- However, research and action programs in the field of prevention are still insufficiently developed in most european countries. Furthermore, there is no working structure allowing for active cooperation at an international level. Yet, only well structured large scale programs can bring us some of the information needed. Indeed, large population groups have to be followed over sufficient periods before conclusions can be reached as to the possible protective effect of given preventive measures.

- A good example of active cooperation at the European level is given by the EORTC (European Organization for Research on the Treatment of Cancer.) In this organization, working groups have been set up with representatives of major cancer hospitals in Europe. Studies are elaborated and conducted jointly in all participating centers, thus obtaining faster and more significant results.

II. PROPOSITION

It is proposed to create a small organism able to achieve the following main goals

1. to PROMOTE research in cancer prevention.
2. to ORGANIZE an active cooperation at the European level in the field of cancer prevention.
3. to INFORM the medical profession and the public of significant progresses in the field of cancer prevention.

III. ACTIVITIES

These goals will be achieved by means of three main types of activities.

1. EUROPEAN WORKING GROUPS. Active investigators in the main fields of cancer prevention will be invited to participate in topic-oriented working sessions. Areas of possible cooperation at the european scale will be defined. Cooperative research programs will then be designed and proposed to the participating institutions.
2. WORKSHOPS IN CANCER PREVENTION. Progress in research can be fastened and improved by international confrontations of projects and results. Such meetings also often represent an opportunity to promote the considered research and its conclusions amongst the public and the authorities. In addition, they can be fruitfull only if attended by a small number of experts, to whom enough time is given for in-depth discussions. Workshops will thus be organized on a regular basis (e.g. one per year), with alternating themes (e.g. : "nutrition and cancer" - "theoretical aspects of carcinogenesis

directly relevant to prevention" - "early detection programs" - "fighting the smoking habit" etc...).

Each workshop will have three aspects :

- a meeting amongst the experts, allowing for both formal exchanges and informal discussions ("au vert")
- an information day for the medical profession
- an information day for the public media.

3. INFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC. Special emphasis will be put on this last point. An original formula will be proposed, namely a genuine cooperation between the experts and specialized journalists, aimed at producing a message that can be adequately received by the public, without however distorting the scientific information.

IV. STRUCTURE

For the first three years, a minimal structure should be considered :

- a non-profit organization
- a half-time medical coordinator
- a flexible secretarial and managerial assistance
- a Scientific Advisory Committee

Later, after this structure will have succeeded in creating active working groups, a larger organization will have to be proposed, perhaps in cooperation with other existing european bodies.

V. PROGRAM

October - November 1981 : start of the project

December 1981 : 1st meeting of the Scientific Committee
in Brussels

February 1982 : formal launch in Brussels, under official
sponsorship of the Commission of the European Communities

March - April 1982 : formal introduction of ECP in various
European countries

May 1982 : session organized jointly by ESP and the
Istituto Scientifico Tumori in Genova, Italy. First meeting
of the "Information" Working Group

November 1982 : first international Workshop on "Cancer and
tobacco" in Brussels

1982 - 1984 : constitution of the Working Groups ; second
and third Workshops

December 1984 : Critical analysis of the project, and pro-
position of a new structure to run the research programs
developed by the working groups

Appendix 2. Correspondence and contacts of Dr. A.P. Maskens with various scientists and organizations about the ECP project

17 Springfield Mount
Leeds
LS2 9NG
Telephone (STD 0532) 453905

JSS/BJ

Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Dr. A. P. Maskens,
Avenue Lambeau 62,
1200 BRUXELLES,
Belgium.

27th January, 1981.

Dear Alain,

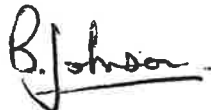
Thank you for your letter of 22nd January and for the enclosed document on cancer prevention. I think there is a lot to be said for this approach and I would encourage you to press on with it. I am a little alarmed however at the second paragraph of the document, where you say that "It is now a well accepted fact that 80% or more of all cancers are caused by modifications of the environment often related to individual life-style". Have you seen Nature of 15th January, 1981? In case not I enclose a photostat of Epstein's paper and the correspondence.

With regard to the names of individuals from this country whose co-operation it might be useful to have, I can think of a number of epidemiologists and clinicians but I feel that you are probably wanting people who are involved in health education, etc., and at this level I find it difficult to think of anyone suitable. Perhaps we could have a word about this when we next meet.

I note you hope to be at the next meeting of the M.R.C. Working Party on Ovarian Cancer. I understand this is going to be fixed for Monday, 9th February. I hope you will be willing to say a few words there on the E.O.R.T.C. projects. Perhaps we can sit together at lunch and talk about the sort of person who might be best for your group.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



for J. S. Scott

Dictated by Prof. Scott,
but signed in his absence.

Encs.

E. O. R. T. C.

PROF. H.J. TAGNON. PAST PRESIDENT

CHAIRMAN OF THE DIVISION OF THERAPEUTIC RESEARCH

EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR RESEARCH ON TREATMENT OF CANCER
ORGANISATION EUROPEENNE DE RECHERCHE SUR LE TRAITEMENT DU CANCER
EUROPAISCHE ORGANISATION ZUR ERFORSCHUNG DER KREBSBEHANDLUNG
ORGANIZZAZIONE EUROPEA PER LE RICERCHE SUL LE TERAPIE DEL CANCRO

Bruxelles, le 26 janvier 1981

Monsieur le Docteur Alain MASKENS
Avenue Lambeau, 62
1200 BRUXELLES

Cher Monsieur,

Je vous remercie d'être venu me parler de votre projet de création d'un groupe de travail, à l'échelle européenne, qui entreprendra de coordonner la recherche cancérologique dans le domaine particulier et important de l'épidémiologie et de la cancérogénèse ; cette recherche sera centrée sur l'observation clinique, le rassemblement des données et leur évaluation statistique.

Je crois avec vous que ce genre de recherche est fort important et peut mener, à brève échéance, à des résultats capables d'être utilisés pour la prévention du cancer. Votre projet me paraît original parce qu'il utilisera l'énorme mine de renseignements constituée par la clinique humaine ; de ce fait, votre projet représente un complément indispensable à la recherche de laboratoire sur les carcinogènes et sur la toxicologie expérimentale. Parallèlement, une meilleure compréhension de la carcinogénèse chez l'homme doit inévitablement conduire au développement de méthodes de diagnostic précoce qui sont totalement ou presque totalement absentes aujourd'hui.

C'est pourquoi je voudrais vous encourager à poursuivre la réalisation de votre projet. Je suis persuadé que l'E.O.R.T.C. pourra collaborer avec vous dès que les premières réalisations de votre programme se manifesteront, et que vous vous serez assuré un premier noyau de collaborateurs dans les différents pays de notre communauté.

Je vous prie de croire, cher Monsieur, à l'assurance de mes sentiments bien cordiaux.



Pr. H. TAGNON

E. O. R. T. C.

DATA CENTER

M. STAQUET, MD. MS. DIRECTOR,
TEL.: 538 57 90

EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR RESEARCH ON TREATMENT OF CANCER
ORGANISATION EUROPÉENNE DE RECHERCHE SUR LE TRAITEMENT DU CANCER
EUROPAISCHE ORGANISATION ZUR ERFORSCHUNG DER KREBSBEHANDLUNG
ORGANIZZAZIONE EUROPEA PER LE RICERCHE SUL LE TERAPIE DEL CANCRO
EUROPESE ORGANISATIE VOOR ONDERZOEK VAN KANKERBEHANDELING

DATA CENTER
TEL.: 538 65 33

Le 27 janvier 1981

Monsieur le Docteur
A. MASKENS
Avenue Lambeau, 62
1200 BRUXELLES

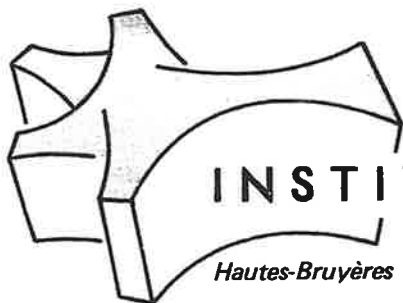
Monsieur,

J'ai pris connaissance avec intérêt de votre projet "European Cooperation in Cancer Prevention". La création d'une petite organisation telle que vous le proposez répondrait certainement à un besoin qui se manifeste au niveau européen. J'espère que vous réussirez dans votre entreprise et je vous saurais infiniment gré de me tenir au courant des développements de votre projet.

Veillez croire, Monsieur, à l'assurance de ma haute considération.

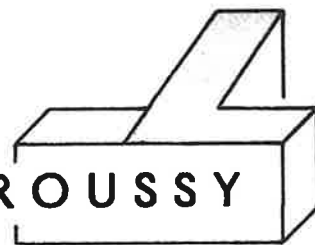


Dr. M. STAQUET
Coordonnateur de l'EORTC



INSTITUT GUSTAVE-ROUSSY

Hautes-Bruyères



La Grange

V./Réf. :

N./Réf. : MT/NG

Monsieur le Docteur Alain P. MASKENS
Avenue Lambeau 62
1200 BRUXELLES
Belgique

VILLEJUIF, le 27 janvier 1981

Mon Cher Confrère,

Merci de votre lettre du 22 janvier que j'ai lue avec beaucoup d'intérêt.

Je suis, comme vous, convaincu que la prévention contre le cancer est possible et doit être réalisée. Cependant j'avoue, pour l'instant, ne pas voir d'autres mesures que la lutte anti-tabac et, dans une certaine mesure, la lutte anti-alcoolique. Dans les autres domaines, nos connaissances sont encore trop floues pour qu'on puisse faire des campagnes auprès du grand public. La lutte anti-tabac est, au véritable sens du terme, une affaire d'Etat, en ce sens que chaque pays a adopté ses propres stratégies, très différentes d'un pays à l'autre. L'information, la communication des résultats obtenus dans chacun des pays est extrêmement utile mais ne peut se faire que dans le cadre de collaboration entre les organisations qui, dans chaque pays, sont responsables de cette lutte anti-tabac. Le congrès qui s'est tenu l'an dernier sous les auspices de l'UICC à Paris a été de ce point de vue extrêmement utile, mais je ne vois pas très bien ce qu'une organisation plus légère pourrait faire dans ce domaine, puisque la lutte anti-tabac représente des dépenses qui sont de l'ordre de 10 millions de francs français chaque année en France, et que son budget sera sans doute augmenté au cours des années à venir. Cette somme peut paraître importante, mais elle est dérisoire par rapport aux sommes que dépensent pendant ces mêmes périodes les marchands de cigarettes pour faire la publicité de leur produit et promouvoir la consommation.

En ce qui concerne la lutte contre l'alcool, c'est un problème encore plus difficile et plus coûteux.

Au total, je pense que pour que votre projet réussisse, il faudrait que vous essayiez d'émettre quelques idées pratiques ou tout au moins que vous organisiez un premier meeting au cours duquel seraient discutées les initiatives qu'il est réellement possible de mettre en vigueur à l'échelle

ÉTABLISSEMENT AYANT LA CAPACITÉ D'UN ÉTABLISSEMENT D'UTILITÉ PUBLIQUE - DÉCRET DU 16 OCTOBRE 1945
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RUE CAMILLE DESMOULINS
94800 VILLEJUIF (Val-de-Marne)
N° SIRET 775741101-00015 code APE 8407

téléphone : 559 49 09

C.C.P. PARIS 709 26 Z
Télex : I.G.R.V.L.J.F. 200349F

UNITÉ DE LA GRANGE
77176 Savigny-le-Temple (Seine et Marne)
N° SIRET 775741101-00023 code APE 8407

Téléphone : 063 90 33

d'une organisation telle que l'EORTC dont le fonctionnement repose en très grande partie sur le bénévolat et les contributions volontaires de chacun des participants.

Tout en vous félicitant donc de votre initiative je crois qu'il faut, pour aller plus loin, que vous démontriez le mouvement en marchant et que ce n'est qu'ensuite qu'il faudra songer à mettre en place une structure permanente.

Merci encore de vos efforts, ayez l'obligeance de continuer à me tenir au courant et croyez, je vous prie, à l'assurance de mes sentiments les meilleurs.



Professeur M. TUBIANA

cc Dr WOLFF



UNIVERSITÉ CATHOLIQUE
DE LOUVAIN

Louvain-en-Woluwe, le 29 janvier 1981.

Faculté de Médecine
Ecole de Pharmacie

Laboratoire de Biotoxicologie

Prof. M. Mercier
Prof. E. Evrard
Prof. F. Poncelet
Prof. M. Roberfroid
Dr C. de Meester
Dr G. Lhoest

Dr. A. MASKENS,
Avenue Lambeau, 62,
1200 BRUXELLES

V/réf.

N/réf.: M.R./P.H./8102431

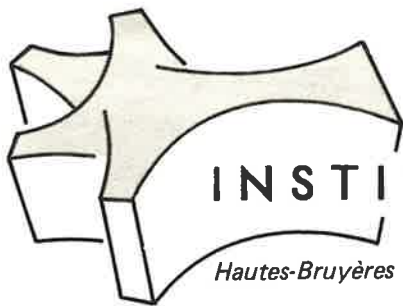
Cher Docteur Maskens,

J'ai lu avec beaucoup d'intérêt votre projet en vue de développer une "European Cooperation in Cancer Prevention" et je vous en félicite.

Je soutiens sans réserve votre initiative et vous souhaite plein et rapide succès.

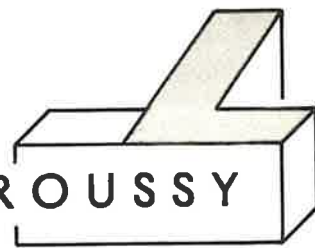
Attendant de pouvoir participer aux activités que prévoit votre projet, je vous prie de croire, Cher Docteur Maskens, à l'expression de mes sentiments les meilleurs.


Professeur Marcel ROBERFROID



INSTITUT GUSTAVE-ROUSSY

Hautes-Bruyères



La Grange

Le 30 Janvier 1981

V./Réf. : JPW/AMH

N./Réf. :

Monsieur le Docteur A. MASKENS
Av. Lambeau 62
1200 - BRUXELLES

Monsieur et cher Confrère,

Je vous remercie vivement de m'avoir communiqué votre programme d'action en ce qui concerne la "Prévention du Dépistage du Cancer".

A vrai dire, il s'agit d'un domaine où relativement peu de choses ont été faites, et dans un domaine que je connais un peu, celui de la Gynécologie.


Certains programmes ponctuels ont été mis sur pied, en particulier par l'O.M.S., mais en Europe, du moins, aucune organisation n'a pris sur elle un tel travail.

Dans le domaine plus particulier de la Gynécologie, on ne peut se contenter de "faire" des frottis vaginaux. Il faut savoir sur qui faire porter un dépistage, chercher les populations à haut risque, chercher les populations susceptibles d'être dépistées sans que cela pose des problèmes insolubles, étudier les possibilités de dépistage selon les caractères de telle ou telle tranche de population; bref, tout un problème à la fois théorique et pratique de plus haute importance.

La prévention elle-même, dans le domaine gynécologique, peut faire l'objet de travaux et de réalisations intéressants; par exemple: modalités de prescription ou non prescription d'oestrogènes après la ménopause, prévoir les contre-indications de la contraception hormonale, participer aux études sur d'autres modalités contraceptives sans risque..., bref, les sujets paraissent larges.

Je pense que votre initiative peut être intéressante et qu'elle concernera, à plus ou moins brève échéance, une organisation comme l'E.O.R.T.C.. Dans mon domaine, je serais tout disposé à vous y aider.

Croyez, Monsieur et Cher Confrère, à l'assurance de mes sentiments les meilleurs.


Docteur J.P. WOLFF
Chef du Service de GYNECOLOGIE.
Président de la Société Française
de Gynécologie.

ÉTABLISSEMENT AYANT LA CAPACITÉ D'UN ÉTABLISSEMENT D'UTILITÉ PUBLIQUE - DÉCRET DU 16 OCTOBRE 1945

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UNITÉ DE LA GRANGE

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PROF. CARLOS M. D. FREIRE DE OLIVEIRA

Av. Bissaia Barreto 74 r/c

3000 COIMBRA

PORTUGAL

Telef. 20963

M.le Docteur A.P.MASKENS

Av.Lambeau 62

1200 BRUXELLES

Coimbra le 15 février 1981

Cher Ami

J'ai reçu ta dernière lettre et aussi le project concernant le nouveau groupe sur la cancérologie préventive.

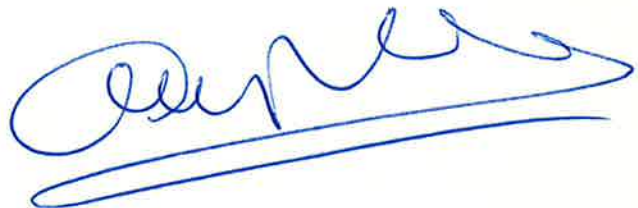
Je pense qu'il s'agit d'une activité très interessante et je suis pret à collaborer avec toi dans les mesure de mes possibilités.

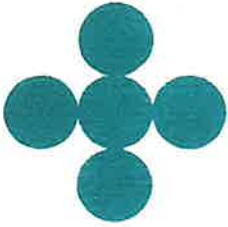
Je suis sûr que tout ce passera bien parce que tu travailles très bien.

Je te prie de me confirmer la reunion prévue pour Milan le 28 mars.

Je serais à Paris du 3 au 10 mars où j'espère participer à une reunion sur cancer de l'ovaire organisée par le Docteur J.P.WOLFF.

Salutations amicalles





AMERICAN HEALTH FOUNDATION NAYLOR DANA INSTITUTE FOR DISEASE PREVENTION

Dana Road, Valhalla, New York 10595 Telephone: 914-592-2600

February 17, 1981

American Health Foundation
320 East 43rd Street
New York, New York 10017
Telephone: 212-953-1900

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Vice President for Research
Health Maintenance Institute

Dr. Alain P. Maskens
Avenue Lambeau 62
1200 Bruxelles
Belgium

Dear Alain:

Thank you for your letter of January 22, which reached me just now since I was out of town myself. As you know, the American Health Foundation is concerned with research and the application of research findings bearing on chronic disease prevention, especially cancer prevention.

Sometimes, however, I think too many meeting reports, too many meetings, and not enough research is done. Also, of even greater importance, is the fact that we the scientists have difficulties in translating well-known documented risk factors to public action to reduce such risk factors like smoking or specific nutrition elements.

Thus, I would need to know more of what you would propose to do.

I do not believe we need more scientific associations, we need more research and we need more public action groups.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

John H. Weisburger, Ph.D., M.D.h.c.
Vice President for Research

JHW:hls

MRC

Medical Research Council

MRC Epidemiology and Medical Care Unit
Northwick Park Hospital
Watford Road, Harrow
Middlesex HA1 3UJ

telephone 01-864 5311/Extn 2823

reference APH/PH

5 March 1981

Dr Alain P Maskens
Avenue Lambeau 62
1200 Bruxelles
Belgium

Dear Alain

~~between~~ Thank you for your letter about the promotion of co-operation of European cancer centres in the field of preventive oncology. My own experience has been mainly in the relationship between cancer and nutrition and the possible mechanisms by which nutrition may cause cancer. However, I would be interested in being involved in preventive oncology. It is possible that Dr Phillip James of the MRC Dunn Nutrition Unit might be interested in joining such a group and I think it would be worth you writing to him. Sir Richard Doll is, of course, very eminent in the field of cancer epidemiology but I do not know whether he would be interested in joining a group such as you suggest. I wonder if you have any ideas about funding for the proposed organisation. Are you intending to apply for EEC funding or do you have something else in mind? I presume that public education would occur not only at the work shops ~~but~~, perhaps a clear health education programme could be designed and tested under the auspices of this group. It occurs to me that you might wish to invite someone from the Health Education ~~here~~ Council in England and I would suggest approaching Dr Debbie Barclay, Health Education Council, 78 New Oxford Street, London WC1.

I look forward to hearing from you concerning the further plans for the co-ordinating group.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely



A. D. Haines MB MRCP MRCGP

E. O. R. T. C.

Office of the President:

Prof. L. G. LAJTHA, M.D., D.Phil., F.R.C.Path.

EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR RESEARCH ON TREATMENT OF CANCER
ORGANISATION EUROPÉENNE DE RECHERCHE SUR LE TRAITEMENT DU CANCER
EUROPAISCHE ORGANISATION ZUR ERFORSCHUNG DER KREBSBEHANDLUNG
ORGANIZZAZIONE EUROPEA PER LE RICERCHE SUL LE TERAPIE DEL CANCRO

LGL/lec

5 March 1981

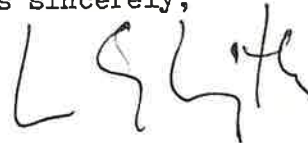
Dr. A.P. Maskens,
Clinique Saint Michel,
rue de Lantsheere 19
1040 Bruxelles
Belgium

Dear Dr. Maskens,

Thank you for your letter of 17 February which, as you know, I took the Board and Council on 27 and 28 February. There is no question about the importance of the project and I think the way you have outlined it sounds excellent. The only point which the Board wish to emphasize is while the EORTC is obviously interested in cancer prevention our Charter clearly states that our responsibility is for research on treatment of cancer. As such we cannot be formally involved in wide-ranging cancer prevention activities (in which, of course, as you know, the IARC and WHO are the two main Governmental organizations, and the UICC the main non-Governmental organization.) However, it was felt that it would be perfectly legitimate for EORTC to be concerned about the prevention of cancer induced by the treatment of cancer and clearly in any such activities of your group the EORTC would be interested and very willing to participate.

Best regards,

Yours sincerely,



L. G. Lajtha

c.c. Dr. G. Haemmerli

PATHOLOGISCHES INSTITUT
DER UNIVERSITÄT

VORSTAND: PROF. DR. MED. M. EDER

Prof. Dr. B. Wiebecke

8 MÜNCHEN 15, den May 3, 1981
POSTFACH oder
8 MÜNCHEN 2,
THALKIRCHNER STR. 36
FERNRUF 089 / 26 60 23 - 24

Dr. Alain P. Maskens
Avenue Lambeau

1200 Bruxelles

Belgium

Dear Dr. Maskens,

I beg your pardon for not having answered earlier to your proposals concerning a European cooperation in cancer prevention.

Your idea is very encouraging and the project may work well, if you will not be too pretentious and if you have idealistic cooperators and organizers.

As the topics of the sessions will change, it may be possible to organize meetings every year. A most difficult point in my view, however, is your intention, always to inform the public about the results of such meetings, and I doubt if it will be possible without distortion.

But in general, the project is a most important attempt in an important field of research and I wish you good luck.

Looking forward to see you at the Falk symposium

I am

sincerely yours



B. Wiebecke



CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHE SUR LE CANCER
INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH ON CANCER

150, COURS ALBERT-THOMAS - 69372, LYON Cédex 2 - FRANCE
Tel. (7) 875 81 81 - Télégr. Unicancer Lyon - Télex 380023 -

In reply please refer to

Prière de rappeler la référence

G3/9

28 May 1981

Dear Dr Maskens,

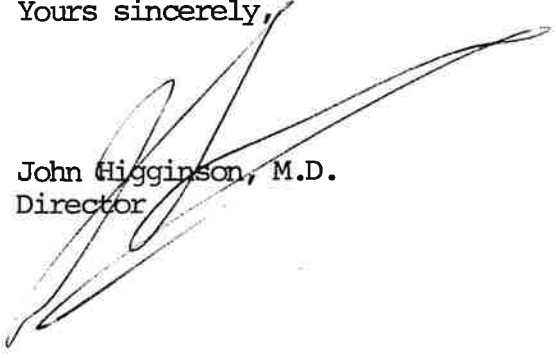
The staff of the Agency and I were pleased to meet you during your visit here on 26 May when we discussed your proposals for a European organization for cancer prevention studies. We shall be pleased to learn of the progress of your suggestions for founding such an organization, particularly those relating to the European Organization for Research on Treatment of Cancer, with which you are associated as a member of the Cooperative Group for the Study of Ovarian Cancer.

To ensure that you are fully informed as to the current programme of the Agency I will see that you are sent a personal copy of the Agency's Annual Report.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

John Higginson, M.D.
Director



Dr Alain P. Maskens
European Organization for Research
on Treatment of Cancer (EORTC)
62 avenue Lambeau
B-1200 Brussels
Belgium

EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR RESEARCH
ON TREATMENT OF CANCER
(E.O.R.T.C.)

Brussels, June 2, 1981

COOPERATIVE GROUP
FOR THE STUDY OF
OVARIAN CANCER

President: Dr J.P. WOLFF
Secretary: Dr A.P. MASKENS

Dr. J.F. Delafresnaye
Executive Director
Union Internationale
Contre le Cancer
Rue du Conseil-Général 3
1205 GENEVE

Dear Dr. Delafresnaye,

besides my activities as secretary of the Cooperative Group for the Study of Ovarian Cancer in the E.O.R.T.C., I am presently working on a new project aimed at promoting the cooperation amongst European Cancer centers in the field of cancer prevention studies. This project is outlined in the enclosed document.

It is our wish to develop this new project in close cooperation with existing international institutions, and I would therefore much appreciate having an opportunity to discuss it with yourself or your collaborators. In fact, having to attend an E.O.R.T.C. meeting in Lyon on June 26/27, I could conveniently spend the preceding day, June 25, in Geneva.

I hope it will be possible to arrange for an appointment with you or your collaborators on that occasion, and I look forward to this interesting visit.

Sincerely yours,


Alain P. MASKENS

Correspondence: Avenue Lambeau
1200 Brussels

Dr J.P. WOLFF: Institut Gustave-Roussy, 16 bis, Avenue P. Vaillant-Couturier
94800 VILLEJUIF, France. Tél.: 726.49.09

Dr A.P. MASKENS: Clinique Saint-Michel, Rue de Lantsheere, 19
1040 BRUXELLES, Belgique. Tél.: 735.60.20

UNION INTERNATIONALE
CONTRE LE CANCER

Rue du Conseil-Général 3
1205 Genève, Suisse
Télégr.: Cancerunion, Genève



422.
Ø 20 18 11

INTERNATIONAL UNION
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Rue du Conseil-Général 3
1205 Geneva, Switzerland
Telegr.: Cancerunion, Geneva

Geneva, June 16, 1981

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Mr. Alain P. Maskens
European Organization for
Research on Treatment of Cancer
(E.O.R.T.C)
Clinique Saint-Michel
Avenue Lambeau 62
1200 Brussels

Dear Dr. Maskens,

Thank you for your letter of 2 June.
I will be in Geneva on June 25 and would be glad to
discuss matters with you.

I think you should also use this opportunity to
make contact with WHO.

As far as the UICC is concerned the organization is
undergoing reorganization in order to increase the colla-
boration between epidemiology and prevention.

Any discussion that we might have would be of an
unofficial nature since it is the Executive Committee which
determines the final policy of the UICC.

Yours sincerely,

J.F. Delafresnaye, M.D.
Director, Geneva Office

JFD/mm

CLINICAL TRIAL SERVICE UNIT
RADCLIFFE INFIRMARY,
OXFORD OX2 6HE.



UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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OXFORD OX2 6BR.

Telephone number for randomisation service: Oxford (0865) 40972

Direct line: 724367

RP/JG

9th November, 1981

A.P. Maskens, M.D.,
Avenue Lambeau 62,
B-1200 Brussels,
Belgium.

Dear Dr. Maskens,

I am not able to attend your ECP workshop on 11/12 December, but for your interest I enclose a copy of the review article on current quantitative knowledge about the avoidable causes of cancer in the U.S. today that Richard Doll and I wrote recently (at the request of the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress). It contains not only a review of current knowledge, but also certain suggestions for future research. In my view the most important such suggestions are:

- (a) A really large case-control study of lung cancer in relation to not only the daily number of cigarettes smoked and the duration of regular smoking, but also the type of cigarette that is smoked. (Encouragement of the switch towards truly less hazardous cigarettes is one of the most painless ways of decreasing cancer onset rates, and has probably already saved many lives: see Appendix E of Doll and Peto.) Such a study would incidentally provide direct evidence about any important role that various occupational factors may play.
- (b) A public-access biological samples bank. The rationale for the latter is set out in the attached submission to an NCI advisory committee, as well as in various places in Doll and Peto.

To Follow

A suitable case/control study would probably cost about U.S. \$1 million or more, while a suitably large public-access biological samples bank would cost at least a few million dollars to establish. Despite these costs, I suspect that such an enterprise would represent one of the best possible uses of money for research into the prevention of cancer.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Peto

Richard Peto,
Reader in Cancer Studies.

/encl.

P.S. Thank you for your DMH reprint.

Sir Richard Doll, FRS, FRCP, Emeritus Professor of Medicine,
Hon. Director, Imperial Cancer Research Fund cancer unit
Richard Peto, MA, MSc, ICRF Reader in Cancer Studies
Barbara Hafner, Permanent Staff, University of Oxford

**Appendix 3. Minutes of the first meeting of the ECP Scientific
Advisory Committee, Brussels, December 11-12, 1981**

EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR COOPERATION
IN CANCER PREVENTION STUDIES
(E.C.P.)

Ref. ECP SCC5

MINUTES OF THE 1ST MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY
COMMITTEE (BRUSSELS, DECEMBER 11-12, 1981)

1. ATTENDANCE

P.F. Conte (Genova)	C. Kettlitz (Milano)
D. Daniele (Torino)	P. Mainguet (Louvain)
P. Dellenbach (Strasbourg)	A.P. Maskens (Brussels)
G. de-The (Lyon)	F. Desch (Mainz)
L. Dobrossy (WHO, Copenhagen)	M. Roberfroid (Louvain)
P. Ebbesen (Aarhus)	L. Santi (Genova)
J. Faivre (Dijon)	J.S. Scott (Leeds)
P. Jeandrain (Brussels)	M. Van Glabbeke (Brussels)
J.V. Joossens (Leuven)	J.P. Wolff (Villejuif)

APOLOGIES for absence were received from: F.J. Cleton (Amsterdam), C. Escoffier Lambiotte (Paris), R.Gnauck (Wiesbaden), P.Goodwin (London), A.P. Haines (Harrow), P. Herzog (Mainz), R.Peto (Oxford), M. Rajewsky (Essen).

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING

Dr. Maskens welcomed the participants, and presented a brief summary of the goals and specificities of ECP. The main objective of ECP will be to promote research in cancer prevention, and to organize an active cooperation at the European level in the field of cancer prevention studies.

3. ROUND TABLE SESSION: "FROM THEORIES OF CARCINOGENESIS TO PREVENTIVE PROGRAMS".

Several members of the Committee presented review lectures dealing with the many aspects of cancer prevention (see encl.1). Drs. Ebbesen and Joossens respectively chaired the first and second part of the round table. Summaries of the lectures were circulated; an edited version will be printed in the coming weeks.

4. WORKING SESSION: "SETTING THE FRAME FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN CANCER PREVENTION STUDIES".

Pr. Scott chaired this working session.

Dr. Maskens was asked to delineate the practical way in which he envisages the functioning of ECP. He suggested to articulate ECP essentially around cooperative research groups to be created in the most important areas of preventive oncology. Active investigators in these areas would be invited to participate in topic-oriented working sessions, where cooperative research programs would be designed and proposed to the participating institutions. In addition, symposia could be organized on a regular basis, so as to stress the importance of given aspects of cancer prevention studies within the medical community. Finally, emphasis should also be put on the need for research on ways to improve the efficiency of public information. Dr. Maskens further indicated that the official statute of ECP during this first phase of its life will be a Belgian based "a.i.b.s." (association internationale a but scientifique). Funds to organize the working meetings and symposia as well as to run a minimal secretariat will be found essentially from private sources. Later, after this small structure will have succeeded in creating active working groups, a larger organization will have to be proposed, possibly in cooperation with other European organisms.

During the discussion which followed, several important points were raised.

- Although some participants felt that research on cancer detection ("secondary prevention") should be included in our program, most felt the emphasis should be on primary prevention.

- There was a general agreement that ECP should function primarily on the basis of active involvement of individuals rather than official representation of institutions.

- Dr. Dobrossy insisted that active coordination be actively sought with WHO and other international organization. All the members agreed on this last point; Dr. Dobrossy was asked to play an active role in transferring information between WHO and ECP; Dr. Santi, who was recently elected Vice-President of the European Federation of Anti-Cancer Leagues, was asked to make the junction with this organization as well. Dr. Maskens indicated contacts had been taken with EORTC, IARC, and UICC (see enclosures 2-4).

- Mr. Jeandrain informed the participants that the sponsorship of the EEC commission has been obtained for ECP; this will be confirmed officially as soon as the administrative statute of ECP will be registered.

- The central importance of public information in the field of cancer prevention was once more stressed, and most participants agreed that this point should be fully integrated within our research programs.

Based on proposals made by each of the members, Pr. Scott attempted to reach an agreement on which topics to select for the first working groups. After some discussion, it was decided to create six groups as defined below; most members of the Scientific Committee agreed to participate in some of these groups, and one coordinator was selected in each case:

Group	Coordinator	Members
Tobacco and Cancer	M. Roberfroid	L.Santi F.Oesch
Diet and Cancer	J. Joossens	(G.de-The) (M.Roberfroid) P.Mainguet
Sexual factors	J. Scott	J.P.Wolff F.Conte G.de-The
Colon Cancer	J. Faivre	P.Ebbesen A.Maskens
Breast Cancer	P. Dellenbach	F.Conte
Information	P. Jeandrain	D.Daniele C.Kettlitz

It was suggested that each coordinator sends to Dr.Maskens a list of possible additional members for their group as well as possible dates for their first meeting; the secretariat of ECP will then help organize these meetings, if necessary.

Dr. Oesch insisted that a separate group should coordinate research related to the basic mechanisms of carcinogenesis at large; it was however preferred not to create a specific such group at this stage.

It was also agreed to organize the first symposium on the last Friday of November 1982, on the topic "Tobacco and Cancer: new research perspectives". This will be an information meeting destined to update the information of the medical profession; it will be preceded by a closed session amongst the members of our "Tobacco and Cancer" working group; the latter will be responsible for the scientific program of the symposium. The members of the "Information" working group, upon a suggestion made by Dr. Kettlitz, proposed to closely follow the progress of this activity.

5. DATE NEXT MEETING.

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the scientific advisory committee together with the first symposium (a suggested date is Saturday morning, November 27, 1982).

Before adjourning the session, Pr. Scott, on behalf of all the members of the Committee, expressed his gratitude to Continental Bank s.a., for their hospitality and generous support for the organization of this meeting.