The Steering Committee meeting of the EPAAC Joint Action was co-chaired by Mr. Martin Seychell, Deputy Director General of DG SANCO, and Ms. Marija Magajne, Head of Project Management and Research at the National Institute of Public Health Slovenia.

The first agenda point was Information from the European Commission. The first point was regarding the creation of an Expert’s Committee on Cancer. Mr. Seychell stated that the Commission recognises that cancer requires a strong policy response. For this reason, the Commission is planning to implement an Expert’s Committee on Cancer, which will include representatives of Member States and a limited number of other stakeholders. Such a working body will improve coordination and increase the visibility and political profile of cancer; the committee will become the main body for information and input from stakeholders. It was agreed that the Committee should work in synergy with the upcoming CANCON Joint Action, and whereas the Joint Action will deal with developing tools to address specific issues, the Committee will explore how results are being taken up in Member States and discuss supporting measures at national and EU level to accelerate uptake and policy decisions. Coordination between these two initiatives will ensure that there is no duplication or overlap.

The Commission will also prepare an Implementation Report, which will deal with the results and conclusions arising from the Council Recommendation on Cancer Screening and the Communication from the Commission on Action against Cancer: European Partnership. This short report will analyse trends towards the reduction of the cancer burden in the EU and provide possible options for action at EU level.

The second agenda point was reporting from the Advisory Committee meeting held the previous day. Sandra Radoš Krnel reported on the technical status of the Joint Action, stating that the Joint Action would be ending on 9 February 2014 and that the final report will be submitted to CHAFEA by the required deadline. As discussed during the Advisory Committee, Work Package Leaders reported that all deliverables will be completed and submitted on time and that no tasks will be left outstanding.

Tit Albreht, Leader of Work Package 10, reported on the Working Group on National Cancer Plans held the previous day. He reported that 24 of 28 EU Member States currently have National Cancer Control Programmes or Strategies and provided a summary of activities since the last Steering Committee meeting in Malta. It was stressed that the Guide on High Quality National Cancer Plans aims to provide a tool for Member States to compare amongst themselves, and that the aim is certainly not to provide a benchmarking tool. Further comments on the Guide should be submitted until 28 January. The members of the Core Working Group were thanked for their dedication throughout the Joint Action and many participants expressed the hope that work on National Cancer Plans would be continued in some form during the CANCON Joint Action.
The next six agenda points consisted of final reporting and conclusions from the EPAAC Work Package Leaders (the presentations can be accessed at http://www.epaac.eu/component/content/article/19-steering-committee-luxembourg/363-steering-committee-luxembourg-materials-available)

Tit Albreht gave a short update on the CANCON Joint Action, which will be beginning on 24 February 2014 and will last three years. CANCON will be led by the National Institute of Public Health Slovenia; its main objective is to prepare a European Guide on Quality Improvement in Comprehensive Cancer Control and to organise a Member State Platform for exchange of experiences and best practices in specific cancer control topics. CANCON consists of nine Work Packages: Guide Coordination, Member State Platform, Integrated Cancer Control, Community-Level Cancer Control, Survivorship & Rehabilitation and Screening, as well as three horizontal WPs. Organisations can still apply to participate in CANCON as Collaborating Partners.

This meeting was the final meeting of the Steering Committee of the EPAAC Joint Action, which will end on 9 February 2014.