

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the SPARC Project: Strengthening Personalised Cancer Medicine Across Europe

Brussels, 18 November 2025

The European Union is taking a major step toward accelerating personalised cancer medicine with the launch of the SPARC project — Support of Personalised Medicine Approaches in Cancer. Funded under the EU4Health Programme (EU4H-2024-PJ-03-4), SPARC is a three-year initiative coordinated by the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), bringing together leading cancer centres, universities, scientific organisations, and patient groups to advance precision oncology across Europe.

The project's official kick-off meeting will take place this Thursday and Friday, marking the beginning of a coordinated effort to scale personalised cancer medicine, support multidisciplinary care, and bridge persistent inequalities in access to advanced diagnostics and targeted therapies.

As a key preparatory step before the formal launch, SPARC partners held a synergy meeting today, 18 November, with the Joint Action on Personalised Cancer Medicine (JAPCM), which is led by Sciensano (Belgium) and will be officially launched in mid-January 2026. This early alignment ensures coherence between the two major EU initiatives and sets the foundation for a unified European approach.

Driving the Future of Personalised Cancer Medicine

Despite important advances in genomics, molecular diagnostics, AI, and targeted therapies, implementation across Europe remains uneven. SPARC aims to close these gaps by focusing on cancers with the highest burden: **lung, breast, colorectal, pancreatic, melanoma, neuroblastoma, adrenocortical carcinoma, and multiple myeloma**, with patient cohorts ranging from 23 to 100 participants across the pilots.

Over its three-year duration, SPARC will:

- Deploy advanced technologies such as **liquid biopsy, Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS), AI-supported analytics, tele-genetics, and advanced imaging**.
- Strengthen and expand **Molecular Tumor Boards (MTBs)** to support multidisciplinary, data-driven clinical decisions.
- Develop interoperable digital tools enabling secure and ethical use of clinical and genomic data.
- Provide targeted training programmes for oncologists, pathologists, radiologists, nurses, and other healthcare professionals.
- Enhance patient engagement, literacy, and inclusion, ensuring a human-centric approach throughout the cancer care pathway.
- Support policy uptake and cross-border collaboration through structured liaison with ongoing EU initiatives.

SPARC: A Strong and Diverse European Partnership

The SPARC consortium consists of 17 beneficiaries, representing a balanced and multidisciplinary network across Europe: 5 hospitals, 4 universities, 4 patient associations, 2 medical associations, 1 research centre, and 1 stakeholder group.

This composition enables SPARC to work across the full cancer pathway, from diagnosis and treatment to follow-up, patient involvement, and policymaking. Each partner contributes distinct expertise in genomics, molecular diagnostics, oncology, data science, ethics, health economics, policy, and patient advocacy, allowing for comprehensive pilots and high-impact outcomes.

Communication and Outreach

As part of its early communication efforts, SPARC has established its full visual identity and launched its central communication channels under the leadership of the European Alliance for Personalised Medicine (EAPM). The project website (sparc-project.eu) is now online and will serve as the main hub for public information, updates, and access to resources. Dedicated LinkedIn and X (Twitter) accounts have also been activated to ensure consistent outreach to clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and patient communities. Supported by a deliverable tracker and a structured communication plan, these platforms will help SPARC maintain transparency, disseminate progress, and engage a broad European audience throughout the project's duration.

The Joint Action on Personalised Cancer Medicine

The Joint Action, led by Sciensano, brings together a uniquely broad coalition: 29 participating countries, 145 partners (45 Competent Authorities and 100 Affiliated Entities), and 6 Associated Partners.

Structured around the patient journey, the Joint Action includes work packages on communication, sustainability, diagnosis, treatment, liquid biopsy, education and training, legal and ethical frameworks, health technology assessment, and data governance.

Today's synergy discussions established shared priorities related to: liquid biopsy and NGS, MTB development, training and education, and joint communication and dissemination strategies. These areas will form the backbone of coordinated work between SPARC and the Joint Action.

A Major Step Forward for Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

Under UPM's leadership, SPARC will directly contribute to the objectives of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, the Cancer Diagnostic and Treatment for All initiative, and the broader transition toward evidence-based, data-driven personalised cancer care.

The European Alliance for Personalised Medicine (EAPM) will coordinate all policy, dissemination, and stakeholder alignment activities, ensuring that SPARC's results are embedded into national and EU-level cancer strategies. Through its extensive policy reach,

multi-stakeholder networks, and experience in building consensus, EAPM will translate scientific and clinical outputs into actionable policy recommendations, promoting sustainable implementation.

As SPARC begins its official launch this week, the project stands ready to shape a more equitable, innovative, and patient-centred future for cancer care across Europe.