



»United against Cancer« - CEE Cancer Patient Summit Ljubljana, Slovenia, 3. - 5. 11. 2006

Cancer Patients Association of Slovenia

Štefka Kučan, Honorary Member, Former First Lady of Slovenia

Cancer Patients Association of Slovenia unites cancer patients and everyone willing to participate at solving the issues concerning cancer. Association was established in 1986 and has been granted status of humanitarian organization. Association's Expert Council consists of well known oncologists that review planned programmes. Association collaborates with other related associations at home and abroad. It is a member of Reach to Recovery International - Volunteer Breast Cancer Support, RRI, International Alliance of Patients Organisations, IAPO and European Cancer Patient Coalition, ECPC. Association was among the founding members when Europa Donna Breast Cancer Coalition was founded in 1994.

- **Aims and goals**

Association aims to contribute to integral rehabilitation of cancer patients by developing and implementing volunteer work and self-help, by spreading knowledge and information about cancer, by increasing awareness of the importance of patient's active cooperation in treatment and rehabilitation, by informing them of their rights and acting as an advocate if necessary. Volunteer work is organized on the principle of self-help, aiming to complement medical treatment and stimulate patients on their way to recovery.

- **Activities**

Reach to Recovery – Volunteer Breast Cancer Support. The principle of self-help is based on the fact that people with the same kind of experience of illness and with similar issues can share their experiences and find it easier to confide their distress and provide efficient support with deep empathy and understanding. To meet this end all the volunteers and experts have attended specific training programme. The programme is organized for every specific illness and has been most completely developed for breast cancer patients. Volunteers provide individual self-help activities in all hospitals dealing with breast cancer surgery. Currently there are 18 support groups on different locations in Slovenia. Support group for testicular cancer patients operates also in Ljubljana with several other groups in the process of founding.

Publications. From 1987 association's bulletin The Window (Okno) is being published twice a year. Informing about activities, providing articles from experts and patient testimonies to raise awareness it informs and encourages patients to get actively involved in their treatment and recovery. It provides also informational booklets: Breast Cancer, Gynaecologic Cancer, Testicular Cancer, Lymphoma, Prostate Carcinoma, Hormonal therapy of Breast Cancer, Mammography, Surgical Treatment of Breast Cancer and Reconstruction.

- **References**

International: Medal Reach to Recovery (1994) – for successfully introduced programme of RRI in Slovenia and Appreciation of RRI (1998) – for successful organization of 10th Reach to Recovery International Conference (Ljubljana, 13th – 16th May 1998)

Local: Award and title of »The Best Volunteer Project 2004« for programme Reach to Recovery, Recognition of Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in 2006 – recognition to volunteer group for exceptional educational achievements and enriching own knowledge and 2 awards »Netko 2006« - for the best web site in the category of Health and Personal Sites & Sites of Community.

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