



Newsletter – Issue No. 1
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Support of Personalised Medicine Approaches in Cancer

Driving Europe's Next Chapter in Precision Oncology

Key Messages:

- SPARC launches as Europe's key implementation engine for personalised cancer medicine.
- Seven clinical pilots will drive real-world integration of liquid biopsy and NGS.
- A European MTB blueprint will support consistent, scalable decision-making.
- Digital tools, training and equity frameworks will strengthen health-system readiness.
- SPARC aligns directly with the Joint Action on PCM, the EU Life Sciences Strategy, the Biotech Act, the AI Act and the Draghi Report.
- The Stakeholder Coordination Group “connects the dots” between EU, national, regional and civil society actors.
- SPARC supports Europe's competitiveness, innovation capacity and long-term Health Union agenda.



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Editorial: A Europe Ready to Move Forward

As the EU enters a new political cycle with renewed attention to health resilience, strategic competitiveness, and digital transformation, SPARC positions itself as a practical implementation driver across these priority areas.

As 2025 comes to a close, Europe finds itself at a critical point in its fight against cancer. The past decade has delivered extraordinary scientific advances, from liquid biopsy and next-generation sequencing (NGS) to AI-enabled diagnostics and sophisticated digital infrastructures. Yet these innovations coexist with persistent fragmentation. Patients still face uneven access to modern diagnostics, Molecular Tumour Boards (MTBs) vary considerably in structure and performance, and digital tools often fail to integrate meaningfully into clinical workflows. Workforce shortages amplify the pressure.

It is within this context that SPARC: Support of Personalised Medicine Approaches in Cancer begins its mission.

Launched under the EU4Health programme and aligned with the forthcoming Joint Action on Personalised Cancer Medicine (JAPCM), SPARC brings together leading institutions, cancer centres, research groups, patient organisations and public health bodies across eight Member States. Its purpose is to convert the promise of personalised oncology into practical, scalable and sustainable solutions for European health systems.

SPARC is not a traditional research project. It is a 36-month implementation programme, designed to confront the growing EU priority of health-system readiness, ensuring that innovation, diagnostics and digital tools can be adopted at scale across Member States.

Why SPARC Matters: The European Moment for Personalised Cancer Medicine

Europe has entered a decisive period. Cancer incidence continues to rise, and although innovative diagnostics and treatments expand, gaps in access widen across borders and regions. Some patients benefit from routine genomic testing; others face long waiting times or no access at all. MTBs may be highly structured in one country and minimal in another. Digital solutions exist, but few integrate meaningfully into clinical reality.

The result is a patchwork: pockets of excellence contrasted with persistent structural inequities.

SPARC addresses this through an overarching objective:

to deliver real-world solutions that strengthen Europe's ability to implement personalised oncology at scale.

This includes:

- boosting diagnostic capacity,
- streamlining personalised medicine workflows,
- integrating liquid biopsy and NGS into routine care,
- strengthening MTBs,
- advancing digital readiness,
- improving patient understanding,
- and reducing inequalities between and within Member States.

Everything in SPARC is designed to be **adoptable, transferable, and aligned with EU policy frameworks**.



The Kick-Off Meeting: Setting a Shared Direction

The SPARC consortium convened in Madrid in late November to establish scientific clarity, operational alignment, and strategic coherence. The meeting reinforced six core themes:

1. Evidence Must Drive Implementation

Methodological rigour, scoping reviews, harmonisation, data frameworks, economic assessment, underpins SPARC's approach.

2. Pilots Must Reflect Real Clinical Realities

Seven pilots spanning major tumour types and diverse health-system contexts will inform actionable recommendations.



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3. MTBs Require Strengthening and Standardisation

SPARC will define what a “fit-for-purpose” MTB looks like: workflow, competencies, reporting, digital tools.

4. Digital Tools Must Be Practical

SPARC will identify digital tools, including AI and tele-genetics, that offer real-world value rather than additional burden.

5. Equity Is Non-Negotiable

All outputs must be viable in both high-resource and lower-resource settings.

6. Coordination With JA-PCM Is Essential

SPARC’s findings, models and training materials must integrate seamlessly into wider EU planning.

What SPARC Will Deliver: A Thematic Overview

Below are the four thematic domains that define SPARC’s work.

1. Diagnostics and Real-World Pilots: Bringing Liquid Biopsy and NGS Into Routine Care

SPARC’s seven clinical pilots are designed to uncover how liquid biopsy and next-generation sequencing can be integrated effectively into real-world oncology.

Key questions include:

- How can protocols be harmonised and timelines shortened?
- What system and organisational barriers limit uptake?
- How can reporting quality be improved?
- How can pilot data flow into MTBs?

These pilots will generate comparative, transferable evidence that guide Member States in scaling molecular diagnostics sustainably.

2. Strengthening Clinical Decision-Making: A New Blueprint for MTBs

MTBs determine how genomic information is translated into treatment decisions but Europe lacks consistency in how they operate.

SPARC will:

- Map MTB structures and competencies,
- Analyse decision-making workflows,
- Identify digital support needs,
- Strengthen reporting standards,
- Improve patient communication tools,
- And develop a scalable European model.

A strong MTB architecture strengthens personalised oncology itself.

3. Digital Transformation That Works for Patients and Professionals

Digital health tools are proliferating, yet implementation remains patchy. SPARC will conduct a **Europe-wide assessment** of digital tools in precision oncology, covering AI diagnostics, tele-oncology, tele-genetics, workflow tools and interoperability layers.

The objective is to identify **usable, scalable, health-system-aligned tools** that:

- reduce administrative burden,
- accelerate diagnosis,
- support MTBs, and
- improve patient experience.

SPARC’s digital recommendations will complement the **AI Act** and support the Commission’s digital health priorities.



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4. Equity, Training, Literacy & Patient Empowerment

Precision oncology only succeeds when systems, professionals and patients are ready.

SPARC will:

- Develop training modules for clinicians, technicians, nurses, and MTB members;
- Co-create multilingual communication tools with patient organisations;
- Conduct system-level equity analysis across regions;
- Provide sustainability and reimbursement recommendations;
- Reinforce the European Cancer Plan's commitment to digital literacy, informed consent and patient empowerment.

This ensures precision oncology is accessible to all — not only those in well-resourced centres.

How SPARC Will Measure Progress

To support Member States and the European Commission, SPARC will monitor progress using shared indicators across:

- diagnostic turnaround times,
- MTB functionality and case throughput,
- digital tool usability and maturity,
- patient understanding and experience,
- equity of access across sites,
- and workforce capacity.

These indicators will feed into future **EU monitoring frameworks**, supporting the vision of a stronger **European Health Union** with measurable progress in personalised cancer care.

Voices From the Consortium

“SPARC gives Europe the unique opportunity to convert cutting-edge science into equitable, real-world patient benefit. This is an implementation programme designed for impact, not theory.”

— Project Coordinator, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM)

From Implementation to Policy: The SPARC–JA PCM Synergy

SPARC, coordinated by UPM, is designed from the outset to feed directly into the **Joint Action on Personalised Cancer Medicine (JA-PCM)**. This ensures SPARC's evidence, MTB models, digital pathways, training modules and equity strategies integrate seamlessly into a coordinated EU roadmap.

The **Stakeholder Coordination Group (SCG)**, led by the **European Alliance for Personalised Medicine (EAPM)**, acts as the project's consultative and governance –policy engine. Through the SCG, SPARC creates structured dialogue among clinicians, scientists, regulators, patient groups, national authorities and regional representatives. This structure allows SPARC to “**connect the dots**” between research, implementation and policy, transforming technical outputs into Member State-ready guidance.

Together, UPM's leadership, EAPM's SCG coordination and alignment with the Joint Action provide a durable pathway for translating innovation into practice across Europe's diverse health systems.

Why SPARC Matters for EU Policymakers and Stakeholders

SPARC arrives at a pivotal moment for the EU. The next political cycle is shaped by:

- the **EU Biotech and Biomanufacturing Act**,
- the **EU Life Sciences Strategy**,
- the **AI Act**, and
- the **Draghi Report on European Competitiveness**.
- And other initiatives..

Each initiative emphasises the need to **remove structural barriers to clinical adoption**, strengthen innovation ecosystems, and accelerate digital transformation.



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SPARC directly supports these ambitions. Its outputs provide **implementation-ready evidence** from real health systems and address the practicalities of:

- scaling liquid biopsy and NGS,
- integrating AI safely,
- developing resilient workforce structures,
- improving digital readiness, and
- embedding equity into system design.

Through the SCG and Stakeholder Forum, SPARC offers EU institutions access to a **pan-European, multidisciplinary implementation network**. This ensures that new initiatives, from biotech to AI to cancer control, remain grounded in **operational reality**, not aspiration.

SPARC also reinforces Europe's ambition to build a stronger **European Health Union**, capable of adopting advanced diagnostics and personalised care at scale.

In essence, SPARC is the implementation engine transforming high-level EU strategies, from biotechnology and digital health to cancer control and competitiveness — into tangible improvements for patients and health systems.

Next Steps: The Road to Early 2026

Key priorities in 2026 include:

- Completion of the Synergy Strategy Report
- Deployment of diagnostic and MTB surveys
- Launch of evidence reviews
- Baseline mapping of MTBs
- Digital maturity assessment
- Activation of the Patient Advisory Group
- Preparation of the Stakeholder Forum
- Strengthening visibility and communication

Conclusion: Europe's Path Forward

SPARC moves into its next phase with a clear responsibility: helping Europe shift from fragmented excellence to shared, scalable personalised cancer care. Through coordinated evidence, strong stakeholder engagement and close alignment with EU policy, SPARC is uniquely positioned to drive health-system transformation. The work ahead will shape not only the future of cancer care but also the future of Europe's leadership in personalised medicine.



SPARC & JA PCM: Working Together for Personalised Cancer Care

SPARC is closely aligned with the Joint Action on Personalised Cancer Medicine (JA PCM), its main EU4Health synergy partner. By collaborating across training, policy, communication, and real-world implementation, the two initiatives aim to strengthen equity and accelerate the adoption of personalised cancer medicine across Europe.

This collaboration will allow both projects to share learnings, coordinate efforts, and ensure a consistent European approach to integrating genomics, AI, and innovative care pathways.

Looking ahead: the JA PCM Kick-Off Meeting will take place in Brussels on 14–15 January 2026. This will be the first major opportunity, after Sparc's Kick-Off Meeting, for all partners to come together, set the direction for the work ahead, and officially launch this important European effort.



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Documenting SPARC's Kick-Off: Participant Insights

At SPARC's kick-off meeting, EAPM conducted interviews with all participants to capture their perspectives and insights, providing a unique record of the project's launch. These interviews will soon be available on the project's YouTube channel and will also be shared across SPARC's social media platforms, offering a valuable glimpse into the start of this important initiative.



Partner Statements:

The statements featured below are part of an ongoing series highlighting the perspectives of SPARC's partners. Each issue of the newsletter will showcase contributions from different partners, providing a window into the diversity of expertise, roles, and viewpoints across the consortium.

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) contributes to SPARC by leading the work on the integration of personalized medicine into clinical and public health practice. As the leader of Work Package 2, UCSC plays a central role in mapping existing precision oncology practices, identifying barriers to implementation and developing harmonized, evidence-based protocols that can be adopted across European healthcare systems. Our team supports the collection of evidence for informed decision-making, the alignment of national frameworks with EU recommendations and the translation of emerging research into standardized procedures for coherent clinical choices.

UCSC also oversees ethical, legal and human rights standards throughout the project. Through its expertise in public health, healthcare management and economic evaluations in healthcare, UCSC ensures that SPARC's solutions are methodologically sound, impactful and feasible across diverse healthcare settings.

We believe that SPARC's mission is essential to ensuring equitable, sustainable access to precision oncology in Europe. By fostering collaboration among clinicians, researchers, policymakers and patient communities, the project addresses current fragmentation and accelerates the transition toward patient-centred and data-driven cancer care. UCSC is committed to supporting this transformation, helping to build a healthcare system where personalized medicine becomes a standard and accessible reality for all.

Lungs Europe

Lungs Europe, a collaboration between the European Lung Foundation (ELF) and the European Respiratory Society (ERS), leads Work Package 7 (WP7) on Patient, Citizens and Stakeholder Engagement within the SPARC project. Our mission is to ensure patients, public, carers, healthcare professionals and other stakeholders are meaningfully involved in and their perspectives incorporated into SPARC's design, implementation and outcomes.

Contribution to SPARC's Objectives

SPARC aims to advance personalized cancer care across Europe. WP7 supports this by embedding patient and stakeholder perspectives into research and implementation, with a particular focus on patients and carers affected by cancers such as lung, breast, colorectal, prostate, melanoma, and rare forms of cancer. We will develop engagement frameworks, educational resources and advisory structures that empower patients to participate meaningfully and effectively. This ensures SPARC's innovations—such as harmonized protocols and AI-driven tools—are patient-centered, practical and ethically sound.

Why SPARC's Mission Matters

Cancer remains a leading health challenge, and traditional approaches often fail to meet individual needs. SPARC's focus on personalized care improves treatment outcomes, enhances quality of life, and promotes equity across healthcare systems. By prioritizing patient and stakeholder engagement, we help ensure that these advances are not only scientifically robust but also aligned with the values and needs of those affected.



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SIOPE

As SIOPE Europe, our role in the SPARC project is to represent the paediatric oncology community and ensure that the needs of children and young people with cancer are reflected throughout the project. We contribute our clinical, research, and policy expertise, and help connect SPARC with hospitals, professionals, and patient groups across Europe.

SIOPE supports SPARC's goals by helping develop practical tools and training that make personalised medicine easier to use in everyday care. We work closely with partners to ensure these approaches are understandable, clinically meaningful, and accessible for teams working with young patients. By sharing knowledge and strengthening links between networks, we help ensure that SPARC's results can be adopted widely.

SIOPE believes SPARC's mission is essential because personalised medicine has the potential to improve diagnosis and treatment for young people with cancer. Yet access to these innovations remains uneven across Europe. By promoting fair access and supporting the safe and effective use of new technologies, SPARC directly contributes to our mission: to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for all children and adolescents with cancer.

Universidad de Navarra

Universidad de Navarra is participating in this European Project, integrating advanced research into the diagnosis of hematological malignancies, with a specific focus on multiple myeloma patients.

Universidad de Navarra is leading one of the pilot studies within WP3, titled: "Application of long-read exome sequencing to the diagnosis of patients with multiple myeloma".

Furthermore, Dr. Felipe Prosper, director of the Hematology Department at the Clinica Universidad de Navarra, will co-lead WP4, focusing on the implementation and optimization of Molecular Tumor Boards (MTBs).

Universidad de Navarra aims to leverage its extensive expertise in hematological diagnostics and state-of-the-art genomic technologies to develop and implement the most advanced diagnostic techniques for patients across the EU.

Our institution believes the mission of the SPARC project is critically important. It places patients first, striving to bring equity and equality to large parts of the EU and promoting the advancements of precision medicine within EU countries.

Fresh from LinkedIn

- [From Rhetoric to Reality: Patients at the Heart of Personalised Cancer Medicine](#)
- [Insights from SPARC's First Workshop: Advancing Readiness for LB-NGS Across Europe](#)
- [The SPARC project is Officially Underway](#)



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ELLOK

With expertise in cancer patients, advocacy, and participatory research, ELLOK's central mission within SPARC is to ensure a patient-centred approach to project actions. Essentially, it will lead efforts to make personalised cancer medicine equitable, accessible, and sustainable, while also contributing to patient training and engagement and to policy outreach. Key ELLOK's tasks include mapping inequalities in cancer care across Europe, training and empowering communities, representing the patient voice in pilots, and linking policy with patient experience. ELLOK supports SPARC's objective of promoting equitable, high-quality personalised cancer medicine by enabling all patients to benefit from innovation in cancer care. ELLOK believes that SPARC's mission is crucial because personalised medicine represents a new era in cancer healthcare – one that tailors prevention, diagnosis, and treatment to everyone. By promoting transnational collaboration and harmonising standards, SPARC paves the way for equal access to precision oncology for all patients in the EU.

