



Dear Mr. Viktor Yanukovych, President of Ukraine,

We are a founding member of the international patient advocate community "CML Advocates Network" that connects 63 leukemia patient groups in 60 countries on all continents. The Ukrainian nationwide non-governmental organization "Osanna Association of patients with CML" is a valued member organization of the Network. We support cancer patients diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia (CML), a very dangerous but well-treatable cancer.

We have recently become aware that there are significant barriers encountered by CML patients in the Ukraine in obtaining access to Imatinib (Glivec) as the internationally agreed appropriate first line therapy which is available to patients in all Central and Eastern European countries. **Imatinib is an oral drug showing overall survival rates over 87% of patients. Patients that cannot access Imatinib have a 5 year survival of only about 20%, while patients achieving a complete response under Imatinib have a life expectancy like the normal population** (source: IRIS-Study 2010, ILTE-Study 2011). Furthermore, 2nd generation drugs Nilotinib (Tasigna) and Dasatinib (Sprycel) have shown even superior responses and survival rates which have also led to approval by the American FDA and European Medicines Agency.

Not only the patients and the members of their families are worried about the situation of CML patients in the Ukraine, but many also international non-governmental organizations like ours:

We learned from the data from the Ministry of Health in Ukraine, more than 2300 patients with CML with an average age of 44 are registered today. From 2008, on initiative of hematologists of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and the Ukrainian nationwide patient organization "Osanna Association of patients with CML", with the assistance of Novartis, started the access program "The Right to Live". In 2008 the Ukrainian government with the involvement of former Finance Minister Azarov N.Ya. had allocated a budget, covering 30% of the annual treatment cost for 560 CML patients. Novartis covered the other 70% of costs as a donation. Thanks to the "The Right To Live" programme, 560 Ukrainians have returned to their usual life and work activity. As side effects under above therapies are usually minimal, patients are able to live normal lives contribute to the Ukrainian society as a whole.

We are worried to hear that at the beginning of 2010, the funding was decreased from 30% to 13%, and no budget has been reserved for the programme in 2012. **We hear from our fellow patients that panic is growing in the Ukrainian patient community!** Interruptions in supply of Imatinib treatment leads to relapse and death. Patients have begun to take medicine in subtherapeutic doses or even interrupt the treatment. Both is life-threatening. In addition, for those on the waiting list, hope is fading, as outdated treatments allow limit survival to 3-4 years, full of pain and suffering.

We are certainly aware of the costs of Imatinib. None of the Ukrainian patients can afford to buy the treatment at their own expense – not even the 30% that would be provided by the Ukrainian Government within "The Right to Live".

We hear that Ukrainian patients associations have submitted a number of letters to the Ministry of Health, but so far the situation has not been resolved. As you might have noticed, you will have received a number of similar letters from patient associations from all across the world, as **the global community is more and more watching the situation of CML patients in the Ukraine.** The international community cannot be silent when we know that almost all Ukrainian CML patients' lives would be saved under the "Right to Live" programme.

We jointly call on the Ukraine Government for comprehension and effective cooperation in overcoming the problems in saving its citizens lives affected by CML. We would consider it a privilege to be able to report that Ukrainian CML patients are now able to access Imatinib, Nilotinib or Dasatinib because of your urgent intervention.

We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your kind and urgent attention to this matter,

Yours sincerely,
Mina DABAN
President of LMC France