



**Press release**

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## **CHU de Liège Marks Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month with Key Advances in the DIOPTRA Project**

**Liège, Belgium — As March marks Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Liège (CHU de Liège), in its role as clinical coordinator of the EU funded DIOPTRA project, highlights important progress in the mission of improving early detection and personalized prevention of colorectal cancer (CRC) across Europe.**

As the main regional healthcare provider and the clinical coordinator of project DIOPTRA, CHU de Liège is responsible for harmonizing recruitment procedures, ensuring quality and consistency across eight clinical sites and one Biobank in eight European countries, and overseeing participant follow-up.

By the end of 2025—marking three years of progress out of the project's four—more than 2,000 participants have been recruited into DIOPTRA by nine clinical centers in eight European countries. The University Hospital of Liège has supported clinical partners in:

- Finalizing operational workflows for the prospective study,
- Standardizing collection of biological samples, electronic health records, and behavioural data, with support from DIOPTRA technical partners,
- Preparing sites for the implementation of DIOPTRA's Mobile App and the initiation of the corresponding prospective sub-study with one year follow-up where healthier lifestyle will be suggested to reduce CRC risk,
- Strengthening communication channels between clinical teams, data management partners, and technology developers.

During Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, the University Hospital of Liège emphasizes on the one hand the importance of the current screening method, which consists of detecting the presence of blood in the stool in the population over 50 years of age in Belgium, and on the other hand the interest in searching for new biomarkers to improve CRC early screening as in DIOPTRA.

“Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is a timely reminder that early detection saves lives,” said CHUL's Principal Investigator Doctor Catherine Loly. “At CHU de Liège, we are proud to contribute to

a project that not only advances scientific understanding but also propose individuals across Europe with concrete tools to take control of their health.”

In the coming months, CHUL will coordinate with other clinical partners to finish participant recruitment, sample collection, and app-based behavioural monitoring. The findings from these activities will contribute to evidence supporting more inclusive, accurate, and user-centred CRC screening pathways.

### About DIOPTRA

DIOPTRA, a Horizon Europe project, aims to revolutionise CRC screening via cutting-edge research towards a holistic, personalised and accessible method for early detection. The project plans to introduce an early screening and risk assessment solution for all citizens that considers risk factors and protein biomarkers to identify high-risk cases in need of colonoscopy. DIOPTRA is powered by a powerful consortium of 28 partners from 15 countries. Each of the DIOPTRA partners carries the background knowledge and have documented expertise on all necessary fields. For more information: [www.dioptra-project.eu](http://www.dioptra-project.eu).

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