

Europe's health deserves the EU's attention: Investing in chronic disease prevention and management

Members of the European Parliament representing EU citizens together with civil society organisations call on the European Commission to recognise health as an objective in its own right in its 2019-2024 strategy, with specific targets on chronic diseases, to allocate the necessary human and financial resources and scale up related investment to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Health plays a central role in building inclusive, competitive and sustainable societies and economies, contributing to growth, wealth and a productive workforce.

EU citizens want a more social Europe, which places the health of the population as a top priority.

Every year in the EU more than half a million working age people die prematurely from one of the four major chronic diseases (cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes), with significant economic and societal costs. One-third of the European population aged 15 and over lives with a chronic disease. Strong commitment to health with dedicated resources and effective investments will improve the health of millions of EU citizens, meaning enhanced productivity and quality of life.

The EU and Member States have committed to achieving the SDGs, including goal number three on good health and well-being, with a specific target on reducing premature mortality from chronic diseases. Progress on this single target can

determine the success of other SDGs related to economic growth, innovation, reducing inequalities, climate action.

This commitment can only be achieved if health is a resourced objective in the next European Commission strategy.

In the context of the UN discussions on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including the High-Level meeting on NCDs on the 27th of September 2018, the work of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) on the Implementation of the SDGs at EU level, and the changing EU leadership in 2019, we call for the following priority actions, which will be key to delivering on the SDGs in the EU and to ensuring robust, effective and innovative EU leadership in health:

A structured EU framework on chronic diseases



- Developed in partnership with national competent authorities, experts, patient organisations and with the involvement of the non-health sectors including environment and agriculture
- With actions across multiple sectors supported through different EU funding instruments

A European Chronic Disease Awareness Day



- Serving as an overall framework for coordinated action at EU, national and local levels
- Acting as a pillar to incentivise Member States and stakeholders to raise awareness, educate and initiate new programmes to prevent, control and treat chronic diseases throughout Europe

A meaningful, ambitious Sixth Reflection Paper "Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030"



- Addressing health and in particular the chronic disease challenge
- Based on the input of a new subgroup on health & social affairs within the MSP on the Implementation of the SDGs
- Recognising that any debate on the Future of Europe cannot underestimate the importance of a healthy EU workforce and human capital

Targeted funding and investment to address chronic diseases



- Investment in chronic diseases should cover:
- Prevention: finance measures and initiatives that support action on risk factors and early detection
 - Treatment and care: for patient-centred, integrated and multidisciplinary care with equitable access
 - Research and innovation
 - Social inclusion and workforce participation

Let the EU response to chronic diseases be an example of "an innovative and European way" whereby EU efforts create economic growth and bring direct benefits to our society and citizens.

Public health is the backbone of a strong Europe which invests in its people. It is a vehicle for policy coherence and represents an exceptional opportunity for bringing the EU added-value to all EU Member States.

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Supporters

- Dr. Cristian-Silviu Buşoi MEP
- Mr José Inácio Faria MEP
- Ms Karin Kadenbach MEP
- Ms Kateřina Konečná MEP
- Mr Miroslav Mikolášik MEP
- Mr Aldo Patriciello MEP
- Mr Alojz Peterle MEP
- Ms Sirpa Pietikäinen MEP
- Ms Daciana Sârbu MEP
- Ms Christel Schaldemose MEP
- MEPs Against Cancer (MAC) Group 
- MEP Group for Kidney Health

- European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA) 
- British Medical Association (BMA) 
- European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare) 
- European Association Working for Carers (Eurocarers) 
- European Patients Forum (EPF) 
- Finnish NCD Alliance 
- Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) 
- Smoke Free Partnership (SFP) 