

The health of Europeans deserves the EU's attention: It's time to invest in chronic disease prevention and management!

Brussels, 16th of May 2018 – Today Members of the European Parliament joined the European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA) to launch a manifesto calling for greater EU investment in chronic disease prevention and management in the next European Commission's agenda.

The manifesto was launched in the context of the upcoming UN High-Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) on 27th September; and anticipated political changes in the European Commission in 2019. MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (Finland), MEP Daciana Sârbu (Romania) and MEP Karin Kadenbach (Austria) hosted the Brussels policy event.

The [manifesto](#) calls on the Commission to recognise health as an objective in its own right in its 2019-2024 strategy, with specific targets on chronic diseases; and to allocate the necessary resources to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It outlines four priority actions to deliver on the SDGs in the EU and to ensure robust, effective and innovative EU leadership in health.

The meeting reflected on concrete measures that can be taken at the European level in order to achieve SDG 3 on good health and wellbeing, especially target 3.4 on reducing by one-third premature mortality from NCDs. Dr Gregor Smith, Deputy Chief Medical Officer at the Scottish Government, shared learning about his Government's experience with Minimum Unit Pricing for alcohol products. Marion Devaux, health economist at the OECD stressed the effectiveness of traffic light labelling on food products to promote healthier choices by consumers. MEP Daciana Sârbu placed emphasis on the need for an EU-wide regulation on trans fats in food. François Wakenhut, Head of Unit 'Clean air' at DG ENV, outlined that integrated policy making not only cross cutting sectors but also vertically, linking local to international levels, is needed to tackle air pollution and its impact on NCDs.

"Health and chronic diseases should be kept high on the political agenda. All Member States have clear commitments to reach the UN targets by 2030. Progress needs to be made on the implementation of the good practices identified" stressed Martin Seychell, Deputy Director General for Health at the European Commission DG SANTE.

"We cannot get a more social Europe without enough attention to health. The value of disease prevention should be integrated directly with economic considerations and policy debates," concluded MEP Alojz Peterle.

In the EU, 550 000 people in working age die from four major chronic diseases (cardiovascular disease, cancers, respiratory diseases and diabetes) every year¹. This carries a significant societal and economic cost. Indeed, OECD has estimated that losing 550 000 productive lives costs the EU economy € 115 billion a year². This corresponds to 0.8% of GDP in the EU.

The 4 priority actions of the ECDA manifesto are:

1. A structured EU framework on chronic diseases
2. A fuller focus on health and tackling NCDs within the EU 'Sustainable Europe' Strategy
3. Better targeting of funding and investment by the EU in respect to tackling chronic diseases
4. A European Chronic Disease Awareness Day

For more information on the manifesto, please refer to the background document [here](#).

To endorse the manifesto, please contact the ECDA Secretariat at info@alliancechronicdiseases.org

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/health/health-at-a-glance-europe-23056088.htm>

² <http://www.oecd.org/health/health-at-a-glance-europe-23056088.htm>