

Immediate EU action on non-communicable diseases could help save almost 2 million lives by 2025

Roadmap to success on NCD prevention has never been clearer, says new report proposing principles, priorities and actions

Brussels, 28 May 2019. A new EU-level strategic framework to prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is needed to put the brakes on the chronic diseases epidemic, concludes “*Towards an EU-Strategic Framework for the prevention of Non-communicable Diseases*”, the new joint paper by the European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA), the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) and the NCD Alliance.

With 70% of respondents to a recent EU Barometer survey wanting to see more EU action on health and with epidemic levels of NCDs undermining people’s well-being, healthcare systems, and Europe’s economic and social prosperity, preventing NCDs should be a main priority for the next European Commission, the papers’ authors believe.

While progress is made on reducing premature mortality from NCDs, longer lives do not necessarily translate into healthy lives. Europeans spend between a quarter and a fifth of their lives in ill-health. €700 billion is spent on treating NCDs in the EU each year -although many chronic diseases are to a considerable degree preventable.

The paper proposes basic principles, priorities and actions for such an EU strategic framework, setting out a roadmap for policy-makers to make change happen. Core to the future Strategic Framework are a number of tangible actions, including:

- Rolling out NCD prevention policies recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO)
- Designing EU financial instruments that support national investment in prevention
- Pursuing ‘EU flagship initiatives’ in areas that can deliver co-benefits for NCD prevention and other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Identifying and rectifying EU barriers to the implementation of national NCD prevention strategies
- Establishing a pan-European system for data collection, policy evaluation and accountability
- Ensuring thorough inter-institutional coordination on health and well-being.

“Few issues are as close to people as their health. There is no doubt that the EU has the legal power to act to prevent non-communicable diseases, the 21st century’s foremost health threat. This paper presents the incoming European Commission with concrete ways to make change happen to promote people’s health and well-being. We hope they will have the courage to take action” says **Freek Spinnewijn, President, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)**.

“Disease prevention is a fundamental component of sustainable development, economic growth and a healthy society. As we are entering a new cycle of EU political leadership, an EU Strategic Framework for NCD Prevention would guide and articulate existing and future initiatives in the field, while being an additional concrete example of the EU added value in health” says **Prof. Em. Raymond Vanholder, President, European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA)**.

Notes to editors

The presented figure (1.8 million lives saved by 2025) refers to the number of deaths that can be avoided among people between the ages 30 and 70 years in the EU by 2025 due to implementation of only the WHO “best buys” for NCD prevention and control. Many more lives can be saved and well-being improved if other WHO recommended interventions are also implemented. [WHO \(2018\) Noncommunicable diseases country profiles 2018](#)

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About the authors

The **European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)** is a change agent, Europe’s leading NGO alliance advocating for better health in EU policies. We are a dynamic member-led organisation made up of public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals and disease groups, working together to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe.

www.epha.org

The **European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA)** is a coalition of 10 European health organisations sharing the same interests in combating preventable chronic diseases through European policies that impact health. The Alliance represents millions of chronic disease patients and over 200 000 health professionals.

www.alliancechronicdiseases.org

The **NCD Alliance** is a unique civil society network, dedicated to improving NCD prevention and control worldwide. Today, our network includes NCD Alliance members, national and regional NCD alliances, over 1,000 member associations of our founding federations, scientific and professional associations and academic and research institutions. NCD Alliance is widely recognised as a convenor of the NCD civil society community, providing thought leadership on global policy, setting priorities for the global NCD response, and mobilising civil society.

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