

Press release: EU Summit on Chronic Diseases – 3-4 April 2014

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9 out of 10 people die of a chronic disease in Europe

ECDA calls for more EU action on UN Targets to reduce deaths

The European Commission is organizing the first **EU Summit on Chronic Diseases** this week. ECDA welcomes the Commission's initiative to organize the Summit, which we hope to be a step towards an **EU framework** to allow the EU to make a significant impact in reaching the United Nations goal of a **25 percent reduction in premature mortality from chronic diseases by 2025**.

Chronic diseases are interrelated, have common risk factors and are largely preventable. Yet, in Europe, **9 people out of 10 die of a chronic disease**. Chronic diseases carry significant human costs (human suffering, reduced workforce, social exclusion, health inequalities etc.). As a consequence **70% to 80% of healthcare costs are spent on chronic diseases**. This corresponds to €700 billion in the European Union and this number is expected to rise in the coming years.¹ **97% of health expenses are presently spent on treatment, only 3% is invested in prevention.**²

Speaking ahead of the Summit, the Acting Chairman of ECDA, Prof Em Norbert Lameire stated:

"The EU needs a framework in order to successfully tackle chronic diseases and such a framework must be developed by 2017 in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. We strongly believe that this is best the way to achieve the [UN targets](#) on reducing deaths from chronic diseases.

Furthermore, one part of the framework, and a way for the European Commission to be proactive on the UN targets, would be for them to make greater use of legal bases and the wide variety of instruments available under the Treaty to improve public health and support Member State actions."

¹ 'Never too early: tackling chronic diseases to extend health life years' The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2012

² 'Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013', White paper, European Commission, COM(2007) 630 final

Note to editors:

About ECDA

The European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA) is a Brussels-based alliance of 11 European health organizations representing major chronic diseases such as: liver disease, kidney disease, respiratory disease, COPD, allergic diseases, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cancer, and diabetes. Together, we represent over millions patients and over 100,000 health professionals.

In 2010 the alliance's members joined forces to put the case for immediate political action to reverse the alarming rise in chronic diseases which affects more than a third of the population of Europe – over 100 million citizens. ECDA plays a leading role in the prevention and reduction of chronic diseases by providing policy recommendations based on contemporary evidence. Its main priorities are primary and secondary prevention related to chronic diseases and the common risk factors - tobacco use, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, alcohol consumption, and environmental factors.

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