



Improving cardiovascular health: European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health launches plan to tackle Europe's leading cause of death

Topics: Cardiovascular prevention, policy, research, innovation

Brussels, 16 May 2022: The European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health (EACH) – a unique European alliance bringing together patients, healthcare professionals, insurers, researchers and industry - presented its Cardiovascular Health Plan for Europe ([link](#)) to policymakers today.

Cardiovascular disease¹ (CVD), mainly heart attacks and strokes, remains Europe's leading cause of death today, impacting the lives of more than 60 million Europeans every day, and costing the EU economy 210 billion EUR every year. The disease affects the young and the old, women and men, and is linked with huge inequalities.

CVD is Europe's biggest health challenge, further compounded by COVID-19, which brought to light the high vulnerability of CVD patients who suffered from backlogs in diagnosis and care and needs to be addressed through a comprehensive policy response.

The proposed Action Plan aims to reduce premature and preventable deaths in Europe by one third in 2030, improve access for all to high quality cardiovascular risk assessments, to set multi-disciplinary care pathways and pave the way for greater quality of life. To achieve this, focus will need to be on primary prevention at population level, improvements in secondary prevention through timely detection, equal access to high quality patient-centred healthcare and an increased uptake of rehabilitation.

The EACH CVH Plan aims to build further on the EU Non-Communicable Diseases Initiative 'Healthier Together', expected in June 2022. The Plan will be informed by the realities in the EU Member States, and an important aspect of implementation will be the creation of national CVH plans, tailored to national realities and needs.

Professor Achenbach, President of the European Society of Cardiology, in the ESC's capacity of providing the secretariat to EACH said: *"cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in the EU and worldwide and affects the lives of millions of people every day. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the need for more resilient health systems that can care for patients living with, and people at risk of cardiovascular disease. The EACH Cardiovascular Health (CVH) Plan calls for EU-wide action to address cardiovascular health in a coordinated way, which will also benefit societies and economies."*

¹ Cardiovascular disease is a vast group of disorders, all related to the heart and circulatory (vascular) system, including stroke, with a high prevalence of morbidity and mortality in the EU.

Today's discussion looked at a "new" Europe in terms of health as it slowly emerges from the COVID-19 crisis, and emphasised the following topics:

- The pandemic led to missed appointments for screening and (non)critical care including access to stroke units, and increased exposure to CVD risk factors. How can efficient prevention be achieved in this new context?
- What form should EU-wide action on Cardiovascular Health take, building on the EU Non-Communicable Diseases Initiative and leveraging EU Funds such as EU4Health?
- The prevalence and impact of CVD varies according to socioeconomic status, gender, and European region. How can inequalities in access to care and treatment be addressed?

EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides stated: "Each year, there are over 1.8 of million cardiovascular disease related deaths in the EU. Behind these figures are individuals, with personal stories as well as families and friends left behind. Collectively, as a Union, we need to do more to address this, to prevent where possible, and to effectively treat those affected. With our new 'Healthier Together' initiative we will help EU countries reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases. This is one of many actions to support Member States increase the resilience of national healthcare systems as part of our work to put in place a strong European Health Union that delivers for all Europeans".

The time for action is now. The evidence is clear - the unbearable burden of cardiovascular disease for patients, people, health systems and society in Europe will only increase, if we do not channel enormous political will, leadership, expertise, and imagination and create a different landscape for cardiovascular health in Europe.

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Note to the editor:

Launched in September 2021, [EACH](#) is a unique collaboration of 17 leading European and international organisations representing patients and citizens, medical professionals, researchers, health technology providers, the pharmaceutical industry, and health insurance associations.

Collectively, the Alliance represents:

- tens of millions of patients
- more than 200,000 health professionals
- over 400 health technology companies
- health insurers covering the medical costs of more than 200 million people
- millions of people living with genetic CVD risk factors but who have not been diagnosed yet.

The Alliance partners are committed to joining forces and sharing expertise to raise awareness on the burden of CVD through a European Plan to improve cardiovascular health of all people in the EU.

For press queries, please contact the European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health Secretariat: each@escardio.org.