

Joint EHN–ESO Policy Statement on Lifelong Cardiovascular and Brain Health

From the First Heartbeat to Healthy Ageing

The European Heart Network (EHN) and the European Stroke Organisation (ESO) support the World Health Organisation- Europe's vision to promote health and well-being at all stages of life. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) and stroke remain Europe's leading causes of death and disability — yet most are preventable. EHN and ESO call for a coordinated, equitable, life-course approach to cardiovascular and brain health, aligned with WHO strategies on Child and Adolescent Health and Healthy Ageing.

A Healthy Start

- Children and adolescents - like everybody else- should have the right to live in health-enhancing and sustainable environments. This implies access to healthy, affordable food, living in smoke-free environments, access to clean air and the possibility to live active lives whilst allowing mental well being.
- Introduce systematic age-neutral emergency/primary care protocols requiring basic screening for hypertension, cholesterol, diabetes and atrial fibrillation.
- Tackle social and economic inequalities so every child can grow up healthy.

Healthy Ageing

- Prevention, early detection and integrated care for CVD and stroke.
- Strengthen understanding of sex- and gender-specific aspects of cardiovascular and brain health, improving diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes for women.
- Create age-friendly, inclusive environments that value older people's contributions and combat isolation.

Targets for 2030

EHN aims to reduce mortality from premature CVD by 30% by 2030. Together with ESO, we call on European and national leaders to:

- Cut strokes by 15% and ensure 90% of patients are treated in dedicated stroke units.
- Adopt national cardiovascular and stroke plans covering the entire chain of care from primary prevention to life after the acute medical event.
- Invest in research, digital innovation and equitable access to care.

A Call for Equity and Action

- Make equity central to all CVD and stroke policies.
- Strengthen tobacco, alcohol and nutrition regulation.
- Fund interoperable data systems to track outcomes and inequalities.

EHN and ESO stand ready to work with WHO, the European Commission and Member States to create a European Life-Course Action Plan for Cardiovascular and Brain Health — ensuring that every person in Europe can live and age with a healthy heart and brain.