



fighting heart disease
and stroke

european heart network



MANIFESTO

2019 European Elections

Every European has a right to a life free from avoidable cardiovascular diseases.

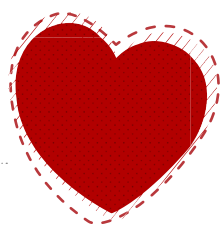
2019 is set to be one of the most politically and democratically significant years in the European Union's (EU) history. With the planned departure of the UK from the EU and growing inward-looking sentiment, the 2019 European Parliamentary elections will be a moment of opportunity, to get closer to European citizens and to deliver on what matters most to them.

If there is the will, EU politicians have the power to deliver good health, as well as a sustainable environment and thriving economy.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) - including heart disease and stroke - is the number one killer in Europe, and the world. With an ageing population, this situation is only set to worsen: the global cost of CVD is set to rise to over **\$1 trillion by 2030**.¹

Each year cardiovascular disease causes 3.9 million deaths in Europe and over **1.8 million deaths** in the European Union. CVD accounts for 45% of all deaths in Europe and 37% of all deaths in the EU.

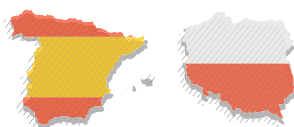
If CVD were a country



Capitals: Heart Disease & Stroke



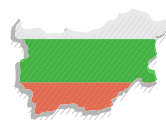
Population: 49 million, the same as the total population of Spain or Poland



Population Growth: 6 million per year roughly the population of Denmark



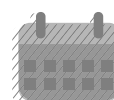
Economy: €210 billion / year – that's over 4 times the GDP of Bulgaria



Mortality: 1.8 million per year of these, 192 000 die before age 65 - which is 15 000 more than the population of Brussels



Productivity: 26 million years lost to ill health and early death



CVD cost the EU economy **€210 billion a year**: 53% (€111 billion) is due to health care costs, 26% (€54 billion) to productivity losses and 21% (€45 billion) to the informal care of people with CVD. Put simply, this is a problem that the EU cannot afford to ignore.

Virtually all aspects of EU legislation have an impact on cardiovascular health - from smart cities and agriculture to food product composition, information and promotion- and the EU must do its part to fight the causes of this preventable killer and invest in research.

2019 will be a critical opportunity to get citizens engaged and get them to vote in favour of a healthier population, a healthier living environment and a healthier economy. This is why the European Heart Network (EHN) calls on all 2019 political candidates and parties to pledge their commitment to improving cardiovascular health and the lives of those living with CVD.



Why pledge to improve cardiovascular health?

Pledge for the People of Europe

CVD takes the lives of 1.8 million people in the EU every year. Of these, 192 000 deaths occur in people younger than 65 years old- more than the population of Brussels.² Of the major contributing factors to CVD, almost all of them are avoidable.

Of the behavioural risk factors that increase CVD rates, dietary factors are the most significant, at the population level. No less important, however, is smoking prevalence, obesity, alcohol consumption, lack of regular physical activity.

There are also risk factors that are out of the control of any one individual. Linked to CVD, as well as diabetes and lung diseases, air pollution is the world's largest single environmental health risk, and it is the number one environmental cause of death in the EU.

We owe it to the people of Europe to create a healthier environment that supports their healthy lifestyle choices and limits the factors that are outside of their control; allowing them to live healthy lives.

Pledge for Economic Prosperity

Building a competitive and world-leading economy can only be done with a healthy population. The total impact of CVD on the EU economy is an enormous €210 billion per year. CVD costs healthcare systems €111 billion, plus an additional €45 billion in informal care.

CVD drains productivity in the EU to the tune of €54 billion per year (€23 billion due to illness, €32 billion due to premature death).

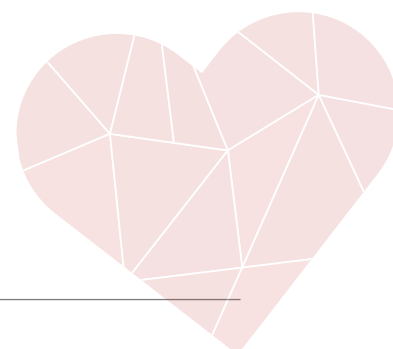
That is more than double the amount spent by the EU between 2015-2018 on managing migration and tackling security challenges.³

If policymakers do not acknowledge the impact of EU legislation on its citizens' health, and their role in promoting and protecting it, they will compromise the EU's economy for generations to come. Now is the time to make a difference, and lead on the international stage.

Pledge for What Matters to Your Voters

The 2019 elections will be a pivotal moment for the EU. It goes without saying that this is the opportunity for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to get close to their constituents, and understand what matters most to them. We only have to look at the Brexit 'Leave' campaign to see that health is high up on that list.

Almost 49 million people live with CVD in the EU.⁴ In addition to the burden on their health, they must also fight reduced employment prospects and gaps in social care support – which can often put a huge strain on families and social inclusion. We urge candidates to continue connecting with people- upholding the Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights – Chapter III on Social Protection and Inclusion.⁵



² <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2013/Table08.pdf>

³ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-4687_en.htm

⁴ <http://www.ehnheart.org/cvd-statistics/cvd-statistics-2017.html>

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities>



What can I do?

There are three things that, as an MEP, you can achieve in the field of cardiovascular health:

1. Support the development of a coherent and comprehensive European CVD Plan
2. Support investment in research
3. Close the feedback loop

Pledge to support the development of a coherent and comprehensive EU CVD Plan

The EU needs a policy initiative on chronic diseases, with a specific plan focused on CVD.

There are policy initiatives on cancer and rare diseases that have been adopted over the years and, against the backdrop of the burden of CVD, we urge political groups and candidate MEPs to call for dedicated resources to address this devastating, and often, preventable loss of life.

A bold CVD plan goes beyond health policy. It needs to be coherent and streamlined with the policies that directly and indirectly impact citizens at large and the lives of those living with CVD.

For this, the EHN calls on you, the 2019 candidates, to pledge to the development of a CVD plan that includes:

- The establishment of an EU Joint Action on CVD. The added value of working together has been demonstrated from other disease areas, such as cancer. The Joint Action should look into best practices on prevention, care and treatment: e-/digital solutions; cardiac and stroke rehabilitation

programmes; methods to re-integrate patients into the labour market – all paying particular attention to decrease inequalities (socio-economic, gender and/or age) in cardiovascular health.

- The establishment of a centralised, comprehensive European cardiovascular diseases registry- to support member states in developing robust data collection methods and registries and create avenues for collaboration. Registries deliver comparable data of high quality that allow for the monitoring of trends, increased effectiveness of policies, strengthening of healthcare systems and provide an effective tool for a patient-centric health care. Orpha-net⁶ is a very concrete and successful example of how gathering and improving knowledge on diseases (in this case rare diseases) can improve the diagnosis, care and treatment of patients.

Pledge to support investment in EU CVD research

To complement the CVD plan mentioned above, EHN calls on you to use Horizon Europe funding for CVD. Two-thirds of the total €876 million funds dedicated to cardiovascular research between 2010 and 2012 came from national sources, including heart foundations (Cardioscape).

According to the Cardioscape survey, “during the first five years of FP7, the total EU contribution to [collaborative cardiovascular

disease research projects] was estimated to be around €163 million,” whereas EHN members are estimated to contribute annually close to €200 million to cardiovascular research in Europe.⁷

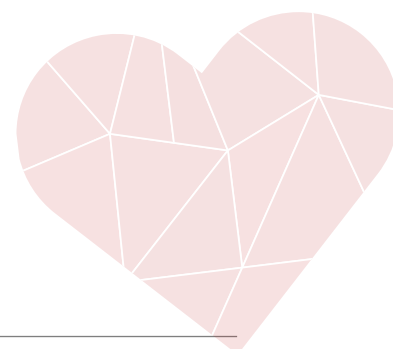
In addition to the much needed data collection and analysis through the disease registries mentioned above, there is an array of CVD knowledge gaps yet to be filled. This can be achieved by:

- Allocating sufficient funds from the future Horizon Europe for basic, clinical and translational research. This research should, among other things, further the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of CVD in women, disease mechanisms and/ or new phenotypes, as well as developing programmes to identify individuals at risk of developing CVD- without causing anxiety.
- Developing a mechanism to better and more efficiently highlight and optimise findings that result from individual research projects. As governments must keep on top of smart spending in healthcare systems, in research too we should maximise the utility of findings by reducing overlaps in research and public spending.

Pledge to close the feedback loop: science, policy and people

In the spirit of better regulation, funds should also be invested in research into the effectiveness of policy measures that address whole populations to limit the development of risk factors for CVD and other chronic diseases. This should be done by:

- Systematically assessing (ex-ante) the health impact of EU policies. In addition to the current practice of assessing the economic, social or environmental impacts, developing a world-class methodology to perform systematic health impact assessments of EU policies and programmes will ensure policy coherence and maximise health outcomes.
- Providing member states with (ex-post) evidence on which policy measures are most impactful, will undoubtedly improve public health and healthcare systems' decision-making.

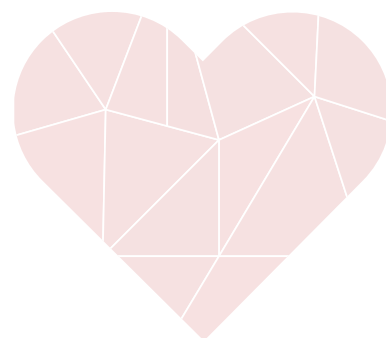


⁷ <https://www.escardio.org/The-ESC/Press-Office/Press-releases>



ABOUT EHN:

The European Heart Network (EHN) is a Brussels-based alliance of foundations and associations dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke and supporting patients throughout Europe. EHN has members in 29 European countries. Its ambition is to create an environment in which the healthier choice becomes the easier choice and that offers the best possible medical care and support for patients throughout their illness.



More information about EHN is available at: <http://www.ehnheart.org/>



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