



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Time for Action: EU reacts to UN Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)**

**European Parliament, European Commission and the World Health Organization join to explore the EU's abilities and commitment to face the global NCDs pandemic, with a focus on cardiovascular diseases (CVD).**

**Brussels, 12 October 2011** - The MEP Heart Group, co-chaired by Ms. Linda McAvan MEP (S&D, UK) and Mr. Cristian Silviu Buşoi MEP (ALDE, RO), meets today in Brussels with an agenda focused on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). 'Learning from the UN Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases', is an essential meeting for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to exchange with Commissioner for Health and Consumer Affairs, Mr. John Dalli, and Dr. Roberto Bertollini, Chief Scientist and World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to the EU, on the outcomes of the UN High-Level Summit on NCDs.

The key objective of the meeting is to highlight the EU's potential to be part of a global response to the threat posed by NCDs.

Non-communicable diseases - a group of conditions that includes cardiovascular diseases, cancer, kidney and liver diseases, diabetes mellitus, chronic respiratory disease and musculoskeletal conditions - remain the leading cause of death worldwide. In Europe, NCDs account for 86% of deaths and 77% of the disease burden in the WHO European Region. Worryingly, recent projections indicate that four major health determinants - tobacco, poor diet, alcohol and physical activity - will be responsible for a significant increase in NCDs prevalence over the next 20 years under status-quo prevention and treatment trends.

Commenting before the meeting, Ms. McAvan and Mr. Busoi said, "By 2030, projections indicate that ca. 80 million Europeans will have died from CVD, the number one killer in Europe. Yet, up to 80% of premature CVD deaths are preventable through early management of risk factors. It is the moral duty of the EU to reverse this trend and the UN Summit on NCDs provides an ideal framework for taking action."



In his presentation, Dr. Roberto Bertollini presented the outcomes of the UN Summit. "The UN Political Declaration on NCDs is an historic achievement. Thanks to the UN Summit, NCDs are finally on the global agenda, which means that Heads of State and Government worldwide - including the EU - are committed more than ever to look for a coordinated response to save millions from premature death and debilitating health complications", he said.

Commissioner Dalli emphasised the EU's determination to take forward the UN declaration addressing the prevention and control of NCDs in partnership with the global community. "The United Nations Declaration is an important step in the right direction. It establishes a broad consensus across the world that prevention must be the cornerstone of our action to fight non-communicable diseases. Our priority must be to keep people well. To keep people OUT of Hospital Beds. If we do not act on prevention now, the burden caused by these diseases will only grow bigger; as the population grows older."

"We must push more and more resources, and more and more political gumption towards prevention. Europe must invest on promoting good health; rather than spending on ill health", he said.

"Even though ambitious and enforceable targets did not survive the negotiations, we have certainly seen a number of really promising words in the UN Declaration, and we should continue building up this momentum", noted Ms Antonya Parvanova MEP, co-author of the European Parliament resolution on the European Union position and commitment in advance to the UN high-level meeting on the prevention and control of NCDs. Her view, as put forward in the EP Resolution, is that the EU should now commit in translating this text into actions, notably during the debates and votes on upcoming pieces of legislation. She declared: "The revision of the tobacco product directive, as well as key dossiers in the area of food policy and consumer protections, will be concrete opportunities to mainstream the prevention and control of NCDs in all our policies, and I sincerely hope that the European Parliament will remain consistent with the approach put forward in its resolution on this issue."

The MEP Heart Group will emphasise its belief in the role that the EU has to play in the fight against NCDs. For this reason, it will underline the need for the European Commission to go beyond the UN Declaration and actively tackle NCDs to provide long-term benefits for the EU population. "Designing a tangible European strategy to address CVD would only be an obvious first step in this sense", concluded the MEP Heart Group Co-Chairs, Ms. McAvan and Mr. Buşoi.

**ENDS**



## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **About the MEP Heart Group**

The main objective of the **MEP Heart Group** is to promote measures that will help reduce the burden of CVD in the European Union and to raise awareness of the disease among target audiences by a series of dedicated activities. The MEP Heart Group is led by two Co-Chairs, Linda McAvan, MEP and Cristian Silviu Buşoi, MEP. The European Heart Network and the European Society of Cardiology provide support to the MEP Heart Group by running its secretariat. [www.mepheartgroup.eu](http://www.mepheartgroup.eu)

### **About the European Society of Cardiology**

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) represents more than 68,000 cardiology professionals across Europe and the Mediterranean. Its mission is to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Europe. [www.escardio.org](http://www.escardio.org)

### **About the European Heart Network**

The European Heart Network (EHN) is a Brussels-based alliance of heart foundations and like-minded non-governmental organisations throughout Europe. EHN has member organisations in 26 countries. EHN plays a leading role in the prevention and reduction of cardiovascular diseases, in particular heart disease and stroke, through advocacy, networking, education and patient support, so that they are no longer a major cause of premature death and disability throughout Europe. [www.ehnheart.org](http://www.ehnheart.org)

### **About the UN Summit on NCDs**

Heads of State and Government came together to address the prevention and control of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) worldwide at the High-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of NCDs between 19-20 September in New York. <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/65/issues/ncdiseases.shtml>

### **EU position and commitment in advance of the UN high-level meeting on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases**

The EP adopted a resolution on the EU position and commitment in advance to the UN high-level meeting on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-0390>