

**What is the MEP Heart Group?**

The Members of the European Parliament (MEP) Heart Group is a forum which provides MEPs with an opportunity to generate dialogue, outreach and activities at EU and Member State level. It is made up of MEPs who have an interest in promoting measures that will help reduce the burden of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) in Europe and raise CVD as a priority on the EU political agenda.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a vast group of disorders, all related to the heart and circulatory (vascular) system with a high prevalence of morbidity and mortality in the EU. CVD impact the lives of more than 60 million people. Cardiovascular events like heart attacks and strokes remain by far the leading cause of death in the EU, accounting for 36% of all deaths and 20% of all premature deaths (before 65) in the EU. More broadly, CVD accounts for 47% and 39% of all deaths in women and men respectively in the wider European Region. Beyond the human cost, CVD also takes a significant toll on health systems, productivity, and informal care by caregivers, with an estimated cost of EUR 210 billion per year in the EU.

**MEP Heart Group Governance**

The MEP Heart Group has been led by two co-chairs. Currently, the MEP Heart Group is co-chaired by Ms Maria da Graça Carvalho (EPP, PT) and Mr Brando Benifei (S&D, IT)

The Secretariat of the MEP Heart Group is run by the European Heart Network (EHN) and the European Society of Cardiology (ESC).

**Work Programme 2023**

The MEP Heart Group’s activities will be aligned as far as possible with the ongoing policy files under review by the European Parliament and track with relevant political events. In 2023, 1 event per quarter with follow up activities are envisaged.

Timeframe	General Topic	Responsible Secretariat Member
April 2023	Registries and the European Health Data Space (EHDS)	European Society of Cardiology (ESC)
Q2 (June) 2023	Shortages of medical devices for CVD patients – what solutions for the EU Medical Device Regulation ?	European Heart Network (EHN)
Q3 (World Heart Day) 2023	Cardiovascular Health in all policies – EP elections 2024	European Society of Cardiology (ESC)
Q4 (November) 2023	Sustainable food choices for cardiovascular health	European Heart Network (EHN)

**What being a of the MEP Heart Group means**

This group is committed to the concept of “cardiovascular health in all policies”. The impact of cardiovascular health can be felt in all aspects of our lives and so must be felt in all aspects of policy.

Supporters of the MEP Heart Group are committed to ensuring that dossiers within the remit of their parliamentary committee feature actions on cardiovascular health promotion and disease prevention where relevant. The MEP Heart Group should act as a “hub” for exchange of experience, information and data so that citizens’ and patients’ concerns are heard and taken into consideration for policy development.

Supporters engage in activities of the MEP Heart Group and use the policy and communications means available to them to address CVD risk factors, advocate new policy initiatives, help the patients and families affected by the cardiovascular disease and make sure that CVD research receives the necessary funding.

### **Informing the public of their representatives efforts**

Policy makers should never need to make a choice between electability and taking action on the number 1 killer and burden of disease in their country. We want to ensure that MEPs who take concrete actions on cardiovascular health are known to the public and can serve as an example to others.

The ESC and EHN commit to communicating both at EU and national level via our membership on the activities of members of the MEP Heart Group.