



Statement by the European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA) made at the sixty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, Malta, 10-13 September 2012 related to the Strategy & Action Plan for healthy ageing in Europe 2012-2020

*August 2012*

## **STATEMENT**

ECDA is fully supportive of WHO Member States for their determination to tackle NCDs, and welcomes the forthcoming detailed targets which include reducing premature mortality caused by chronic diseases by 25% annually by 2025.

ECDA encourages the adoption of national action plans for NCDs as well as the adoption of targets and indicators to support the implementation of the UN Political Declaration on NCDs.

ECDA recommendations are as follows:

### ▶ **Invest in prevention measures to tackle chronic diseases**

- Early detection and diagnosis, implementation of population-based quality assured screening programmes, evaluation of social inequalities and development of novel tools to detect chronic disease in at-risk populations are all measures that should be encouraged at Member State level
- Austerity measures adopted by many European countries have seriously affected access to care for chronic non-communicable disease patients. Yet, the economic crisis should be used as an opportunity to explore new and innovative ways of tackling chronic diseases

### ▶ **Intervene on health determinants: tobacco, food and nutrition, alcohol and physical activity**

- Introduce mandatory standardised packaging of cigarettes with 80% of front and back devoted to pictorial health warnings
- Adopt a nutrient profiling system that will allow health and nutrition claims only on healthier options
- Ensure the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol
- Prioritise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists over those of motorists in urban development and ensure easy access to facilities encouraging physical activity

### ▶ **Devote resources to health care**

- eHealth interventions hold promises but more research into effectiveness and cost-effectiveness is needed
- Educate and train health care personnel so that they can deliver optimal health, including but not limited to caring for patients with multiple chronic conditions

### ▶ **Enhance cooperation on research and ensure availability of comparable data**

- To overcome the existing fragmentation and duplication of research in Europe in the health field, human health must be at the core. There is a major gap in translational research in Europe and better care delivery will only be possible if sustainable networks across Europe join together and share their resources to tackle the scientific challenges
- Comparable data at European level on incidence, prevalence, risk factors and outcomes, is urgently needed. European registries are clearly missing.

### ▶ **Build an environment that promotes health and encourages citizens to make healthy choices**

- Structural and agricultural funds should contribute to creating healthier societies
- Employ regulatory interventions to restrict advertising for unhealthy products, especially to children, and potentially for setting compositional standards, e.g. salt and fat.

# EUROPEAN CHRONIC DISEASE ALLIANCE

United to reverse the rise in chronic disease

## Chronic diseases together:

- ▶ account for over 86% of deaths in the WHO European region
- ▶ affect 1/3 of the European population → over 100 million citizens



## Chronic non-communicable diseases include:

- ▶ heart disease
- ▶ stroke
- ▶ hypertension
- ▶ diabetes
- ▶ kidney disease
- ▶ cancers
- ▶ respiratory diseases
- ▶ liver diseases

**4 health determinants have a major impact on all types of chronic non-communicable diseases:**

### TOBACCO

- ▶ Standardize packaging with branding removed and large graphic health warnings
- ▶ Ban Internet sales
- ▶ All regulatory, scientific and advisory capacity should be independent
- ▶ Complete disclosure of tobacco components
- ▶ Fully implement the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC)
- ▶ Ban tobacco advertising
- ▶ Comprehensive ban on smoking in all public & workplaces
- ▶ Increase tobacco tax above inflation
- ▶ Ban cigarette machines

### NUTRITION

- ▶ Adopt a firm agenda in product reformulation: fat, sugar and salt
- ▶ Ban transfats
- ▶ Mandatory food labelling with traffic light coding
- ▶ Prohibit all marketing of unhealthy food to children
- ▶ Control provision & sale of fatty snacks, confectionary and sweet drinks in public institutions, such as schools and hospitals
- ▶ Introduce subsidies on healthy foods to improve patterns of food consumption

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- ▶ Intensify collection, analysis & dissemination of information on effectiveness of interventions
- ▶ Monitor citizens' participation in physical activity through regular survey
- ▶ Set standards to prioritise non-motorised transport & recreational areas encouraging physical activity
- ▶ Encourage in-school & after school sport
- ▶ Monitor child & adolescent growth

### ALCOHOL

- ▶ Ban alcohol advertising, promotion & sponsorship of events via media or sports
- ▶ Restriction of advertising for alcohol products
- ▶ Reinforce awareness
- ▶ Reduce the availability of alcohol by reducing the number of outlets
- ▶ Develop help & care against alcohol dependence
- ▶ Train staff in primary care to recognize signs of alcohol-use disorders
- ▶ Reduce legal alcohol concentration in the blood to 0.2 g/L for all vehicle drivers

#### THE EUROPEAN CHRONIC DISEASE ALLIANCE RECOMMENDS: