



EUROPEAN FITNESS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SECTOR SUPPORTS EU ACTION ON CVDs

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EUROPEACTIVE AND ITS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERS CALL ON MEMBER STATES TO ADOPT OR UPDATE THEIR NATIONAL CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE (CVD) STRATEGIES IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS AND THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AS WELL AS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING A EUROPEAN CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH PLAN.

INTRODUCTION:

On 3 December 2024, the Council of Ministers adopted **Council Conclusions on the Improvement of Cardiovascular Health in the EU**. These conclusions identify physical inactivity as one of the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD) and other noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). They urge Member States to prioritise combating physical inactivity, foster collaboration between health and physical activity stakeholders, and implement a series of targeted measures.

EuropeActive and its undersigned National Association Members enthusiastically welcome this much-needed focus on physical activity, which aligns closely with our sector's strategic vision and core objectives. We call on Member States to adopt and implement the Conclusion's recommendations on physical activity and to accelerate comprehensive strategies that prioritise prevention and health promotion through active lifestyles.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS:

"There is strong evidence for the impact of physical activity on improving cardiovascular health, with the potential for a 27% reduction in the relative risk of cardiovascular disease mortality in those who engage in recommended levels of physical activity. Despite this, many children and adults still fall far short of meeting the guidelines for physical activity. Promotion of and evidence-based physical activity programmes for people of all levels of ability should be a core component of cardiovascular disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation."

In addition to addressing CVDs, the Council Conclusions highlight the role of physical activity in preventing or mitigating other key risk factors, such as diabetes and chronic kidney disease (CKD). This underscores the interconnected nature of many NCDs and the wide-ranging health benefits of regular physical activity.

OUR ENDORSEMENT FOR COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS:

We join the Council in urging EU Member States to **ADOPT** or update, if appropriate and where necessary, cardiovascular health measures, in the framework of standalone or wider NCD strategic agendas, that also reflect the outcomes of Joint Actions in the national context, involving relevant stakeholders, with a view of:

"Encouraging closer links between the health and physical activity sectors to better integrate physical activity/adapted physical activity into the management of care for patients with CVD and other NCDs by promoting, and where appropriate prescribing, adapted physical activity/health sports activities for people with/at risk of cardiovascular disease that are inclusive of people of all levels of physical ability."

The fitness and physical activity sector strongly supports integrating physical activity into healthcare systems. However, we urge national governments to go further by investing in physical activity as a cost-effective and preventative measure to enhance public health, improve well-being, and strengthen the resilience and sustainability of healthcare systems.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S COMMITMENT:

We also welcome the EU's Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare, **Olivér Várhelyi's recent commitment to tackling CVD through a dedicated European Cardiovascular Health Plan**. On 16 January 2025, Commissioner Várhelyi stated:

"I intend to create a European Cardiovascular Health Plan, similar to the Cancer Plan but even more operational. Cardiovascular diseases have a major advantage over most cancers – they are usually preventable, and we have more research available. We need better and more diagnosis and treatment, including personalised treatments. The European Health Data Space will play a key role in this respect."

This plan represents a crucial opportunity to advance prevention, management, and care for CVD across Europe. Physical activity must be recognised as a cornerstone of these efforts, backed by adequate EU funding and resources to support prevention initiatives.

COMMITMENT FROM THE FITNESS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SECTOR:

EuropeActive and its undersigned National Association Members reaffirm their commitment to:

- ***Advocate for sustained progress in CVD and other NCDs prevention, management and rehabilitation strategies through physical activity initiatives.***
- ***Promote public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaboration to achieve holistic and impactful health strategies.***
- ***Engage with national governments, the European Commission, and other stakeholders to secure funding, implement robust strategies, and maintain political momentum.***

Our sector stands ready to play an integral role in realising the vision of a comprehensive European Cardiovascular Health Plan with physical activity at its core.





About EuropeActive

EuropeActive, headquartered in Brussels, is the leading European Health and Fitness Association dedicated to promoting the benefits of a healthier, more active lifestyle to Europeans. Its mission extends beyond increasing participation in physical activities, encompassing advocacy for health and fitness as integral parts of everyday life.



Disclaimer

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