

Letter to Mr. Tonio Borg

Health Commissioner

Rue de la Loi 200

1049 Brussels

Brussels, 24 April 2014

Dear Commissioner Borg,

On behalf of the European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA), we would like to express our sincere gratitude to you for organising the EU Summit on Chronic Diseases.

We are extremely pleased to acknowledge your enduring commitment to the promotion of health in Europe and were honoured to be invited to contribute to the Summit, by presenting ECDA's views on the added-value of stakeholders' involvement and by sharing further the key messages ECDA had prepared in anticipation of the EU Summit with the hope to further guide its Conclusions.

The Conclusions of the summit are far-reaching: stronger political leadership, a focus on societal challenges, enhanced prevention policies as well as more citizens' involvement can go a long way to hinder the chronic diseases epidemic.

Yet, key suggestions, made during the Summit by various stakeholders, including Ms Christel Schaldemose MEP, in favour of setting specific targets for tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs) encompassing both horizontal approaches and disease-specific actions, were regrettably not included in the Summit Conclusions.

For over a decade, the EU has been addressing risk factors common to all NCDs. This approach is observably insufficient as NCDs remain the N°1 killers in Europe as well as one of the primary causes of health expenditure. At the same time, some EU disease-specific strategies have been implemented and the extremely positive outcomes of such enhanced frameworks were presented and applauded at the Summit.

It is not equitable that some disease groups are favoured over others as this ultimately signifies that patients do not benefit from a targeted framework for tackling the major diseases that they suffer from whilst others do. It is the EU's moral duty to create an EU framework on chronic diseases with a strategy and action-plan encompassing disease prevention & health promotion, screening & early diagnosis, research cooperation & coordination, data collection and e-health. This would allow all stakeholders (Governments, health professionals, patients, etc.) to streamline their efforts, guarantee

a level playing field for tackling all chronic non-communicable diseases and working towards realistic targets to the benefit of all citizens across the EU.

We are sure that DG SANCO has duly taken into account the above-mentioned recommendations put forward during the Summit and expect that these will be an integral part of the work which will be performed by the coalition of stakeholders to be set up. Of course, we gladly look forward to contributing to the work of this group.

Thank you for your attention and dedication for the promotion of health in the EU.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Em. Norbert Lameire

Acting Chairman

On behalf of the European Chronic Diseases Alliance (ECDA)

About ECDA

The European Chronic Disease Alliance ([ECDA](#)) is a Brussels-based alliance of 11 European health organizations representing major chronic diseases such as: liver disease, kidney disease, respiratory disease, COPD, allergic diseases, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cancer, and diabetes. Together, we represent over millions patients and over 100,000 health professionals.

In 2010 the alliance's members joined forces to put the case for immediate political action to reverse the alarming rise in chronic diseases which affects more than a third of the population of Europe – over 100 million citizens. ECDA plays a leading role in the prevention and reduction of chronic diseases by providing policy recommendations based on contemporary evidence. Its main priorities are primary and secondary prevention related to chronic diseases and the common risk factors - tobacco use, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, alcohol consumption, and environmental factors.

For further information contact the Secretariat:

Laure Sonnier

E-Mail: info@alliancechronicdiseases.org

Tel.: + 32-2 213 13 12