

SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

AGENDA ITEM 10

HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RESILIENCE IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION 2024-2029

Honourable Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,

The **European Heart Network** and **World Heart Federation** applaud WHO and its Member States for the new regional strategy and action plan to bolster health security in the European region, which rightly recognises that essential health services should continue whilst healthcare systems respond to emergencies.

People Living with Noncommunicable Diseases, particularly cardiovascular disease, face significant challenges in emergency and humanitarian settings due to strained health systems, disrupted services, and limited access to essential care. People Living with NCDs typically experience worse outcome from a range of conditions, including COVID-19. In fact, an estimated 60–90% of COVID-19-related mortality was attributable to one or more NCD comorbidities, including an elevated risk of heart attack and stroke following SARS-CoV-2 infection.

We urge Member States to endorse and implement the Preparedness 2.0 strategy and to:

1. Recognize people living with cardiovascular disease and other NCDs, as a vulnerable population in health emergencies;
2. Increase domestic mobilisation and allocation of resources to address NCDs, especially CVD, by accelerating the implementation of the WHO NCDs Best Buys; and
3. During health emergencies, ensure equitable, adequate, continued, and integrated access to essential health services and medical products across the continuum of care – from prevention and risk identification to diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation – particularly for people living with cardiovascular disease and in low-resource settings, with a strong focus on access to primary health care, whilst at the same time safeguarding mental and physical health of health workers.



Finally, progressive realisation of Universal Health Coverage, including investments in NCD prevention and care in benefit packages, is vital to ensuring healthy populations and resilience against future pandemic threats.

Thank you.

Word Count: 273