Statement by Commissioner Kyriakides on World Diabetes Day

Brussels, 13 November 2022

Tomorrow, 14 November is World Diabetes Day. On this occasion, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides, made the following statement:

"Diabetes can affect everyone, irrespective of background, age, and gender. Today, one in ten adults, or more than 32 million people, have diabetes in the EU. This is twice as many as a decade ago. Diabetes takes a heavy toll on our societies and our healthcare systems. It increases the risk of developing potentially dangerous cardiovascular diseases. We also know that it increases the risk of serious disease for persons suffering from COVID-19. And it puts a heavy strain on our health budgets, with diabetes accounting for an estimated 9% of EU health expenditure in 2019.

As a result, we can and must do more to tackle diabetes. The burden of type 2 diabetes can for example be reduced by interventions that support a healthier lifestyle, such as a healthy diet, physical activity and not smoking.

As with our work on cancer, when it comes to non-communicable diseases, prevention is always better than the cure. This is why the Commission is already working on actions to better prevent, detect and treat non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, in a more comprehensive way.

To achieve this, under the 'Healthier Together – EU Non-communicable diseases initiative', we have already launched actions worth €156 million in our 2022 EU4Health programme, with Member States having expressed interest in improving early detection of diabetes and other cardiovascular diseases through screening, for example. Children and young people are specifically targeted in initiatives focusing on health promotion and disease prevention.

In addition, under our joint action on health determinants, €75 million has been allocated to address risk factors related to diabetes and other non-communicable diseases to better understand them and support actions to mitigate them.

Furthermore, Member States’ joint action on diabetes and cardiovascular diseases has €53 million, still available for application until January 2023, to take further actions at national level to tackle diabetes.

We are also working with Member States and stakeholders to find the best way to share best practices on health promotion and non-communicable disease prevention, including on physical activity, nutrition, and other risk factors such as tobacco consumption. I invite everyone to use EU tools, such as the Best Practice Portal to upload best practices, and the EU Health Policy Platform to disseminate information.

Taken together, these actions are about people. We know that diabetes has a significant impact on daily life for so many. This must change. On this World Diabetes Day, I call on Member States and stakeholders to continue working with us to help improve the lives of the 32 million Europeans living with diabetes. This is our responsibility.”

Press contacts:

  Stefan DE KEERSMAECKER (+32 2 298 46 80)
  Célia DEJOND (+32 2 298 81 99)

General public inquiries: Europe Direct by phone 00 800 67 89 10 11 or by email