

Healthier Together EU Non-communicable diseases initiative and the Stroke Action Plan for Europe

The document can be used as a briefing and information tool for stroke advocates engaged in the 'Healthier Together' initiative.

The following briefing document contains information about the EU NCD initiative, called 'Healthier Together', and the added-value of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe (SAP-E) to the three key questions in focus of the initiative.

In this document you will find:

1. Healthier Together – main elements of the initiative
2. The relevance of Healthier Together for health advocacy and stroke-related issues
3. Healthier Together and the Stroke Action Plan for Europe
4. Links for further information

1. Healthier Together – purpose, scope, methodology and outcome

Purpose

The new Healthier Together – EU Non-communicable diseases initiative is established to help Member States reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). It will cover the period 2022-2027.

The European Commission is committed to supporting EU countries in their efforts to reach the nine voluntary targets of the United Nations and the World Health Organization by 2025, as well as the Sustainable Development Goal 3.4, which aims to **reduce premature mortality** from NCDs by one third, and promote mental health and well-being by 2030.

Support will in all cases focus on implementation, helping EU countries to transfer best practices, develop guidelines, roll out innovative approaches, etc. Patient organisations and health advocates will be supported in actions that can contribute to the same objectives, also financially, via providing opportunities for funding, partially available through the EU4Health programme - with €5.3 billion budget, and partially through global institutions like the OECD.

Scope

The Healthier Together is focused on the following five key areas. All strands will include a health equity dimension, thus supporting the reduction of health inequalities - cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, mental health and neurological disorders, and health determinants

Areas of focus: prevention and promotion, better knowledge and data, screening and early detection, diagnosis and treatment management, and quality of life of patients

Timeline

In the months of January 2022 to July 2022 priorities, actions and synergies with policy areas relevant to the reduction of NCDs burden will be discussed with EU countries in the European Commission's [Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases](#).

Healthier Together - Webinar Calendar

Stakeholders' webinars: 3 February, 17 March, 27 April, 3 June

Member States' webinars: 28 January, 3 March, 8 April, 19 May

Methodology

Discussion with European umbrella health organisations will take place via a specialised platform (the Health Policy Platform), these organisations will be able to provide input in an open public consultation. Next to this, specific webinars will be scheduled between January and June to develop this initiative.

Outcome

By June 2022 a document with guidelines for member states will be developed, based on a public consultation with stakeholders from the health sector. The document will provide a structured and joint framework for actions, identifying the most successful actions for member states to follow, including implementation practices for realising concrete actions on the ground.

Stakeholder consultation

The 'Healthier Together initiative addresses five strands: a) cardiovascular diseases, b) diabetes, c) chronic respiratory diseases, d) mental health and neurological disorders, e) health determinants. Contribution from health stakeholders is essential to gather:

- Priorities for action in each of the above-mentioned strands
- Examples of effective policies, best practices, promising approaches, innovative actions (to be put for consideration of Member States) to effectively address priorities
- The field of work of stakeholders and actions that stakeholders can do in collaboration with public health authorities and other parties

2. The relevance of Healthier Together for health advocacy and stroke-related Issues

The Healthier Together initiative could be a major opportunity to generate more impact in fighting NCDs including stroke-related issues on EU national member state level. As specific objectives and actions will be developed collaboratively until mid-2022, participation in the Healthier Together network could bring opportunities for synergies with relevant stakeholders in the EU health policy sector. Additionally, funding opportunities for stakeholders from the health civil society sector will be available.

Below you find a list of potential benefits to stroke advocacy when engaging in the Healthier Together initiative.

Stroke Advocacy – EU Level

- increase political awareness of the stroke condition as a priority health challenge
- form partnerships with EU health advocates
- form partnerships with EU institutional actors
- influence EU health policy (translates in national policy)

Stroke Advocacy – National Level

- raise the profile of stroke issues on national level (awareness building)
- form partnership with national Health Ministries (lobby and collaborate)
- gather and translate best practices from other EU countries
- become a bridge between EU and national health policy networks

3. Healthier Together and the Stroke Action Plan for Europe

SAFE's members and the Stroke Action Plan for Europe (SAP-E) National Coordinators can both benefit from engaging in the processes of the Healthier Together initiative by using the opportunity to:

- **advance their advocacy and influence policy** on national level related to NCD and more specifically stroke
- **advocate for the SAP-E** and the adoption of a national stroke plan in countries, where not yet present

Key elements of the SAPE:

The targets - four overarching targets for 2030 have been identified:

- to reduce the absolute number of strokes in Europe by 10%
- to treat 90% or more of all patients with stroke in Europe in a dedicated stroke unit as the first level of care
- to have national plans for stroke encompassing the entire chain of care from primary prevention to life after stroke.
- to fully implement national strategies for multisector public health interventions to promote and facilitate a healthy lifestyle, and reduce environmental (including air pollution), socioeconomic and educational factors that increase the risk of stroke

Seven domains, covering the whole care pathway, with recommendations have been identified:

The following seven domains covering the whole care and support pathway were identified, with supporting state of the art practices, a review of the current situation and research and development priorities for translational research - primary prevention, organisation of stroke services, management of acute stroke, secondary prevention, rehabilitation, evaluation of stroke outcome and quality assessment and life after stroke

Based on the scope of the Healthier Together stakeholder consultation, the following issues are of most priority for the initiative. Following each issue you see a list of how SAP-E can contribute to it, should your Health Ministries ask for stroke input into their Healthier Together plans.

<p>FOCUS OF HEALTHIER TOGETHER: consultation questions</p>	<p>HOW SAP-E CAN CONTRIBUTE</p>
<p>1. Priorities for EU-supported action</p>	<p><u>The seven domains of SAP-E</u> https://www.safestroke.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SAPE-ESJ-publication-2018.pdf</p> <p>As main priorities to focus on, you can refer to the seven domains of SAP-E, which represent the entire chain of stroke care and can be used as benchmark for developing all-round services for each disease strand of NCDs.</p>
<p>2. Effective policies, best practices, promising approaches</p>	<p><u>The Stroke Action Plan for Europe</u> https://www.safestroke.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SAPE-ESJ-publication-2018.pdf</p> <p>Within each of the seven domains of the SAP-E, state of the art practices are outlined along with research and development priorities for translational stroke research</p> <p>You can use these to highlight the priorities in your own country</p> <p>In addition, the SAP-E implementation committee have released:</p> <p><u>SAP-E Key Performance Indicators</u> A national strategy for multi-sectorial public health interventions promoting and facilitating a healthy lifestyle and risk factor control.</p> <p><u>National Stroke Plan template</u> A national stroke plan defining pathways, care and support after stroke including pre-hospital phase, hospital stay, discharge and transition, and follow-up.</p> <p><u>Essentials of Stroke Care</u> The Essentials of Stroke Care manifesto was made as a tool for the SAP-E, aimed at people working with stroke. It provides with</p>

	<p>a comprehensive overview of evidence-based interventions, covering the entire chain of stroke care.</p> <p><u>Country Best Practices</u> You can propose good examples of effective policies, best practices, promising approaches from within your country.</p> <p>In addition, see examples of country specific best practices for implementation of SAP-E here: https://actionplan.eso-stroke.org/best-practices/</p>
<p>3. Role of stakeholders</p>	<p>Stroke support organisations and Stroke medical societies need to play a vital role in the planning, development, decision-making, and implementation of their national NCD plan.</p> <p>These stakeholders need to have an active role in the process and collaborate closely with Member States’s Health Ministries to influence their submission and contributions to the Healthier Together initiative.</p> <p>You can provide the patient and stroke survivor perspective into the decision-making process by prioritising needs, services, support and research.</p> <p>No decisions should be made about future prevention and healthcare without the involvement of stroke patients and survivors.</p>

4. Links for further information

European Commission – NCD - Overview and Approach:
https://ec.europa.eu/health/non-communicable-diseases/overview_en#latest-updates

Flash Report - Stakeholder Webinar on Healthier together – 15.12.2021:
https://ec.europa.eu/health/latest-updates/flash-report-stakeholder-webinar-healthier-together-eu-non-communicable-diseases-initiative-15-2021-12-16_en