

PRESS RELEASE

Europeans join call for more to be done to tackle obesity Obesity Day provides opportunity for everyone to pledge support

Brussels, 11 May 2017: People from across Europe are being urged to support a call for EU Member States to do more to tackle the region's growing obesity epidemic.

The action is being organised to coincide with European Obesity Day which takes place on Saturday 20 May and is being promoted via a European Obesity Day website page <https://www.europeanobesityday.eu/get-involved/please-join-call-action/>. Everyone who pledges their support can also download a certificate of acknowledgement.

Europe's leading organisation responsible for research into obesity, the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO), has warned that EU Member States need to do more to tackle the growing obesity epidemic, or they could face crippling costs of providing medical care in the future.

They are also urging people to reduce the stigma around obesity and to do more to support those who have it.

According to EASO, too few European countries have effective strategies in place to tackle obesity, and some have none at all. "Despite the growing epidemic, many plans consist only of collections of vague goals rather than concrete measures," says EASO President, Professor Hermann Toplak.

"To be effective, Member States need to have comprehensive strategies that cover all aspects of weight management. These should include the promotion of healthier lifestyles and the reduction in demand and consumption of excessive amounts of high-calorie food and drinks, as well as the treatment of obesity to help prevent the many other diseases on which it impacts," he said.

Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and several forms of cancer are among the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and chronic conditions attributable to excess weight.

To help facilitate cooperation between EU Member States and to inspire them to do more, EASO organised a major conference in Brussels this week (on Wednesday 10 May). More than 100 national policymakers, representatives from the European Institutions, the WHO, and healthcare specialists attended to discuss the challenges they face and to share examples of best practice.

EASO's 32 member associations and more than 70 collaborating centres will be marking European Obesity Day at a national level by staging events over the coming week to create greater awareness and understanding of obesity. The initiatives range from walks and fun runs to free public health checks and consultations with healthcare professionals.

In line with the theme for European Obesity Day 2017, *Tackling Obesity Together*, people across all EU member states are being encouraged to participate.

According to World Health Organisation, obesity is one of the greatest public health challenges of the 21st century. Its prevalence has tripled in many countries in Europe since the 1980s.

Several reports have shown that if the number of overweight people and those with obesity continues to increase at the same rate, it will affect more than half of all European citizens by 2030. In some countries, it may be as high as 90%.

Further details of how to support European Obesity Day and where to find more information on obesity, and obesity prevention and treatment, are available on the European Obesity Day website: www.europeanobesityday.eu. Activities can also be followed on Twitter (@EOD2017 and #EOD2017) and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/EObesityD/>

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For further information:

Please see the European Obesity Day website: www.europeanobesityday.eu; the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) www.easo.org; and the World Health Organisation www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/obesity.

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