

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **EU Member States need to do more to tackle obesity**

#### **Many could face crippling medical care costs warns leading research organisation**

Brussels, 9 March 2017: EU Member States are being called on to do more to tackle the growing obesity epidemic or they could face crippling costs of providing medical care in the future.

The stark warning, and the call for more to be done to prevent and to treat the disease, comes from Europe's leading organisation responsible for research into obesity, The European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO).

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. This 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 some cancers are among a number of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and chronic conditions attributable to excess weight.

The call for Member States to take more effective action has been made by EASO to coincide with the start of activities taking place in the run up to European Obesity Day on May 20.

Among them will be a major policy conference in Brussels on May 10 to which EU Member State authorities will be invited in order to share best practice and to discuss the challenges they face when developing and implementing obesity strategies. It will also be attended by representatives from various European institutions and the World Health Organization.

At national level, EASO and its member associations in 32 countries in Europe, will also be staging various events to draw attention to the situation and to create greater awareness and understanding of obesity. 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 obesity and overweightness continue to increase at such an alarming rate, it will affect more than half of all European citizens by 2030. In some countries this figure 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](http://www.europeanobesityday.eu). Activities can also be followed on Twitter (@EOD2017 and #EOD2017) and on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/EObesityD/>

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**For further information:**

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

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