

MedTech Europe Cardiovascular Sector Group's Response to the European Commission's Targeted Consultation on EU4Health 2024 Work Programme

The MedTech Europe Cardiovascular Sector Group welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the European Commission's Targeted Consultation on the EU4Health 2024 Work Programme

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in the European Union, impacting the lives of all of us, across EU countries, regions, ages and genders. Every day, CVD affects the lives of over 60 million European citizens, and every year, it costs the European economy around EUR 210 billion¹. It is also linked to huge inequalities in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for citizens.

COVID-19 only exacerbates these challenges. Patients affected by CVD constituted 65% of all COVID-19 deaths attributable to underlying conditions. Citizens without diagnosed health conditions before falling ill with COVID-19, were found to have developed cardiovascular abnormalities in the aftermaths of the virus. Moreover, the pandemic hugely impacted access to healthcare, delaying diagnosis and treatment².

While investments in cardiovascular health and healthcare infrastructure, as well as national prevention plans and awareness raising efforts, have resulted in a reduction of CVD mortality in the past 50 years¹, CVD is still the number one killer in Europe. There is urgent need for more investments and coordinated EU-wide action.

The EU4Health Programme, an unprecedented commitment to health in the European Union, could and should be a critical instrument to promote action on cardiovascular health³. Co-existing EU initiatives, such as the Healthier Together initiative⁴ and the Joint Action on prevention of CVD and diabetes⁵, are welcomed, however, not sufficient.

The MedTech Europe Cardiovascular Sector Group is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the development of the EU4Health Work Programme for 2024. In 2023, the Programmes' work plan did not account for any action or investment targeted to address CVD and CVD-related challenges. In our response, we call for the 2024 work plan to allocate investments to CVD and, more specifically, highlight three urgent needs:

¹ European Cardiovascular Health Alliance (2022). 'A European Cardiovascular Health Plan: The need and the ambition'. https://www.cardiovascular-alliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/EACH-Plan-Final_130522.pdf

² MedTech Europe (2021). 'An EU Action Plan for Better Cardiovascular Health'. https://www.medtecheurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/an-eu-action-plan-for-better-cardiovascular-health_25_5_2021.pdf

³ EU4Health Programme 2021-2027. https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union_en

⁴ Healthier together – EU non-communicable diseases initiative 2022-2027. https://health.ec.europa.eu/non-communicable-diseases/healthier-together-eu-non-communicable-diseases-initiative_en

⁵ EU4Health Work Programme 2022. https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-07/com_2022-5436_annex2_en.pdf

1. Investments in the entire CVD care pathway, going beyond disease prevention and health promotion to ensure funding for detection, diagnosis and innovative treatment, including in times of crisis
2. Investments in training, resilience, and retention of CVD healthcare professionals, to ensure the growing care demands for CVD patients are met, including in times of crisis
3. Investments in Cardiovascular Innovation Access and digital tools, to ensure availability and accessibility of innovative treatments and care solutions for CVD patients and reduce the burden on healthcare systems, including during times of crisis

About MedTech Europe and the Cardiovascular Sector Group

MedTech Europe is the European trade association for the medical technology industry including diagnostics, medical devices and digital health. Our members are national, European and multinational companies as well as a network of national medical technology associations who research, develop, manufacture, distribute and supply health-related technologies, services and solutions.

The MedTech Europe Cardiovascular Sector Group represents the Cardiovascular Medical Technology Industry, which provides solutions to the burden of CVD on individuals, families and the wider society and economy. Medical technologies play a central role in the fight against CVD. These innovations, which span the full spectrum of patient care from diagnosis to cure, save lives and add tremendous value to European society. High-quality medical technologies are central to Europe's quest for better cardiovascular health and can be found throughout the patient journey, for instance: the blood tests that identify patients with high cholesterol, high risk of heart attack and heart failure; the modern imaging devices that detect narrowing of the arteries; the small cardiac implants such as pacemakers, defibrillators and trans-catheter technologies; the implantable cardiac monitors and associated home monitoring solutions; the minimally invasive heart valve and stent procedures that improve clinical, procedural and patient outcomes, while reducing associated costs and recurrence.

For more information, visit <https://www.medtecheurope.org/cardiovascular/>