

Press Release

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Know your numbers – experts welcome first-ever EU Screening Week and encourage citizens across Europe to check their blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar

Key messages:

- ESC, EASD and EASO welcome the first-ever EU Screening Week, launched at the EASD Annual Meeting in Milan on World Heart Day, and the newly published proposal for an EU Council Recommendation on cardiovascular health checks.
- Under the banner “Know Your Numbers”, the EU Screening Week encourages people to check key health indicators – including blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol – and take preventive action sooner.
- The campaign builds on the European Commission’s EU Safe Hearts Plan, which aims to cut premature cardiovascular deaths by 25% by 2035 and sets EU-wide targets for regular blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar checks.
- The three associations call on EU Member States to strengthen prevention and early detection by implementing evidence-based health checks across Europe.
- Cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity are closely interlinked and among Europe’s most pressing health challenges, together affecting tens of millions of people and placing a growing burden on health systems.

Milan, Italy – 29 September 2026

At a dedicated press conference at the EASD Annual Meeting in Milan, organised by the European Diabetes Forum (EUDF), three leading European cardiometabolic scientific associations - the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) and the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) - joined European Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare Olivér Várhelyi to welcome the launch of the first-ever EU Screening Week.

Cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity are among Europe’s most pressing health challenges. They often coexist, are deeply interconnected, and place a growing burden on people, families, healthcare professionals and health systems.

The scale of the challenge is clear: cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of mortality and morbidity in the EU, accounting for one in three deaths - 1.7 million deaths in 2022 - and affecting an estimated 62 million people. Diabetes affects 35.3 million people in the EU, while around one in six adults live with obesity. Diabetes and obesity are serious diseases in their own right and, on top of that, major risk factors for cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, alongside hypertension and high cholesterol.

Too often, these conditions are detected only once symptoms appear or complications have already developed. The first EU Screening Week is a timely opportunity to move from reacting to

the disease to acting earlier. Under the banner “Know Your Numbers”, the campaign encourages people to check key health indicators - including blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol - and take preventive action sooner.

The initiative reflects the ambition of the EU Safe Hearts Plan, which recognises the links between cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity and promotes a more integrated, person-centred approach to cardiometabolic health.

It also supports the goals of the European Commission’s proposal for an EU Council Recommendation on cardiovascular health checks, which encourages Member States to strengthen health checks and identify diseases and risk factors earlier.

The three associations welcome the proposal and call on Member States to build on this momentum by making prevention and early detection a stronger part of healthcare systems across Europe.

European Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare Olivér Várhelyi commented: “Prevention cannot wait. That is why we are launching the first-ever EU Screening Week: to encourage people across Europe to know their numbers and take action for their health.

By raising awareness and making screening more visible and accessible, we can help detect risk earlier and prevent serious cardiometabolic diseases before complications develop. Prevention starts with awareness - know your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar.

I invite all citizens to get checked, speak to a healthcare professional and take control of their health. The newly published EU Council Recommendation on health checks reinforces this message and encourages Member States to introduce comprehensive health checks to support prevention and early detection across Europe.”

Professor Cecilia Linde, President of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC), stressed: “For too long, a person’s chances of preventing cardiovascular disease have been influenced by factors beyond their control, including where they live, their gender, or their socioeconomic circumstances. Screening is our chance to change that. By identifying risk early and connecting people with timely care, we can help ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to live a longer, healthier life. This is not only an investment in the health of today’s population; it is an investment in our children, our communities, and the future of Europe.”

Professor Francesco Giorgino, President of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD), commented: “Too many people are still living with type 2 diabetes without knowing it, sometimes until complications have already developed. Screening can help us identify risk earlier and act sooner. Unfortunately, type 2 diabetes greatly enhances the risk for cardiovascular diseases and thus requires an accurate prevention strategy. But prevention must as well include people living with type 1 diabetes, who also face increased cardiovascular risk over time. Earlier action and better prevention can reduce complications and improve lives.”

Professor Volkan Yumuk, President of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO), said: “Obesity sits at the centre of cardiometabolic health. It is a chronic disease in its own right and a major driver of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and other serious complications.

If Europe is serious about prevention, we must identify and address obesity earlier. This means moving beyond BMI alone and ensuring that evidence-based screening, diagnosis and management of obesity are integrated into healthcare systems. EU Screening Week is an important opportunity to put earlier, integrated and person-centred action into practice.”

Professor Chantal Mathieu, President of the European Diabetes Forum (EUDF), noted: “This is a historic moment where cardiovascular disease, with its two most evil associated diseases, diabetes and obesity, takes centre stage. The European Commission has clearly understood the momentum to present Europe with a plan to prevent, detect early and better manage all forms of diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease. Supported by the Commission and guided by these three strong professional organisations, our Member States must do one thing now: turn the plan into action! And start with screening during this European Screening Week.”

The cardiovascular, diabetes and obesity communities welcome the screening, awareness-raising and educational activities taking place across EU Member States during EU Screening Week. They also call on national governments to build on this momentum by making evidence-based health checks and early detection an essential part of healthcare systems.

The Presidents of ESC, EASD and EASO encourage citizens across Europe to take part in the campaign: visit a local screening initiative, speak to a healthcare professional, and take the first step towards knowing your numbers. Understanding your blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, body mass index and waist circumference is essential to protecting your health.

Early detection saves lives. It is time to make prevention visible, accessible and part of everyday healthcare across Europe.

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Sources

- [*OECD, The State of Cardiovascular Health in the European Union*](#)

- [IDF Diabetes Atlas 2025](#)
- [Eurostat obesity statistics](#)
- [Recommendations for EU-wide cardiometabolic health checks](#)

About ESC

The European Society of Cardiology brings together healthcare professionals from more than 150 countries, working to advance cardiovascular medicine and help people live longer, healthier lives.

For more information, please visit: [European Society of Cardiology](#)

About EASD

The European Association for the Study of Diabetes is a membership-based non-profit organisation with the mission to promote excellence in diabetes care through research, networking, and education. EASD is a leader in education for healthcare professionals and develops statements and guidelines that translate the latest research into best practices in diabetes management.

For more information, please visit: www.easd.org

About EASO

The European Association for the Study of Obesity is a European federation of professional membership associations from 40 European countries working to advance obesity research, education, prevention and care across Europe.

For more information, please visit: [Home - EASO](#)

About EUDF

The European Diabetes Forum unites all stakeholders from across the diabetes landscape in Europe to present a united voice on the needs of the diabetes community to governments, regulators and payers. Members: EASD, European Foundation for the Study of Diabetes (EFSD), Foundation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND), BreakthroughT1D, Primary Care Diabetes Europe (PCDE), SFD (Société Francophone du Diabète), International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF Europe), International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes (ISPAD), EASO.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.eudf.org/>