

Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe:

Support for the inclusion of fluoride varnish, gel, mouth rinse and resin-based composite in the WHO model list of Essential Medicines

The Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe ("the Platform") is a joint initiative of the key European organisations involved in oral health, including the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE), the Council of European Chief Dental Officers (CECDO), the European Association of Dental Public Health (EADPH), the Oral Health Foundation and the Pan-European Region of the International Association for Dental Research (PER-IADR) as well as 20 Associate Members. Through our advocacy efforts at a European level, we aim to achieve improvements in oral health across Europe.

Ahead of the meeting of the 24th WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines, the **Platform strongly supports the inclusion of fluoride varnish, fluoride gel, fluoride mouth rinse and resin-based composites in the WHO model list of Essential Medicines**. All these are relevant for the key aspects of the WHO's Action Plan for the Global Strategy on Oral Health, which all European countries support and should drive forward.

In this Strategy, the WHO explicitly underlines the **lack of access to oral health promotion and oral disease prevention programmes and the limited use of fluorides**. A reference is also made to the **lack of availability and affordability of fluoride toothpaste** and other methods such as fluoridation of the water supply. In response, the **WHO recommends as part of strategic objective 2, the uptake of fluoride products by Member States** to enable all people to achieve the best possible oral health, as well as address social and commercial determinants and risk factors of oral diseases and conditions. In settings where the availability of fluoride toothpaste is not guaranteed, having access to alternative fluoride medications could make an important difference in the health outcomes of the population. And this **would represent a step forward in tackling oral health inequalities on a global scale**.

Consequently, the Platform reiterates its support for oral health-promoting activities and **calls on the WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines to approve the inclusion of additional fluoride medications to the model list of Essential Medicines**.

Furthermore, the inclusion of **resin-based composites in the list of Essential Medicines provides a further useful material to substitute mercury-containing materials for dental restorations**, thereby supporting and facilitating the implementation by member states of the **Minamata Convention**.