

Written statement from IDF Europe to provisional agenda item 10: Ageing is living: a strategy for promoting a lifetime of health and well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030

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The International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF Europe), representing the voice of people living with diabetes (PwD) and healthcare professionals, welcomes the forthcoming development of the strategy “Ageing is Living: A Strategy for Promoting a Lifetime of Health and Well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030.”

Europe is undergoing a significant demographic shift due to a rapidly ageing population. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), often associated with older age, account for approximately 80% of the disease burden in the WHO European Region. Over 65 million people currently live with diabetes,¹ a lifelong, complex condition and a leading cause of premature mortality, disability and reduced quality of life. Type 2 diabetes (T2D), historically linked to older age, is now increasingly being diagnosed in children, adolescents and young adults. This trend, combined with increasing life expectancies, means that Europe will see more people living with diabetes for longer periods, often alongside other chronic conditions. Consequently, healthcare systems face a dual challenge: supporting ageing populations while managing chronic diseases that increasingly begin earlier in life.

Primary prevention remains the foundation of healthy ageing. The strategy must prioritise the creation of health-enabling environments that empower individuals to live well and reduce their risk of developing NCDs. Social determinants of health, including income, education, employment, and housing, account for up to half of all health outcomes.² To achieve meaningful change, Member States (MS) must adopt a health-in-all-policies approach, integrating health considerations across all sectors and policies.

Promoting healthy ageing requires a life-course approach to diabetes and NCD prevention, management and care. This means considering the distinct needs of PwD and those living with other NCDs holistically at all stages of life to optimise well-being, health outcomes and quality of life.

Diabetes affects nearly every major organ system and is closely interconnected with other NCDs, including cardiovascular disease, obesity and chronic kidney disease. Secondary prevention is therefore essential to limit the development of complications and multimorbidity. Older adults with diabetes experience higher rates of functional disability, including accelerated muscle loss, mobility impairment, frailty and multimorbidity, compared to those without diabetes. They are also at greater risk of

¹ [Diabetes in Europe | IDF Diabetes Atlas](#)

² [Social determinants of health and health enabling environments - IDF Europe Site](#)

developing geriatric syndromes such as cognitive impairment and are more likely to require carer support.³ To support diabetes management and prevent complications, health systems must implement integrated, multidisciplinary care teams capable of managing multimorbidity and ensuring continuity across the care pathway. This should be combined with a life-course approach that includes regular reassessment of individuals' medical, functional, psychological and social needs to ensure optimal glucose management and quality of life.

The digitalisation of healthcare systems, with advances in data analytics, artificial intelligence, remote monitoring and medical technologies have transformed diabetes care. However, these innovations must be inclusive and adapted to the needs and capabilities of both younger and older populations. The adaptation of medical devices and digital tools to older adults is essential to ensure accessibility and usability. Equally, investments in digital and health literacy and targeted training for both PwD and carers are vital to empower users and facilitate uptake. PwD of all ages must be meaningfully involved in the development, design and evaluation of innovations and digital tools to ensure they reflect real-world needs.

IDF Europe supports the development of a strategy on healthy ageing and underscores the importance of adopting a holistic, life-course and person-centred approach to diabetes and NCDs, one that promotes prevention, fosters integrated care and ensures that everyone, regardless of age, can live with dignity, autonomy and optimal health.

³ [13. Older Adults: Standards of Care in Diabetes—2025 | Diabetes Care | American Diabetes Association](#)