

## 75th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC75)

### Agenda item 10 - Ageing in living: a strategy for promoting a lifetime health and well-being in the WHO European Region 2026-2030

#### Solving the Vascular Gap

##### Statement by:

##### European Independent Foundation in Angiology/Vascular Medicine (VAS)

[The European Independent Foundation in Angiology / Vascular Medicine \(VAS\)](#) reaffirms that the WHO Framework 2025–2030, which defines the goals for resilient and sustainable health systems in Europe with a global vision, represents a key opportunity to fill the existing gap in action and equity towards **vascular diseases**. The latter are conditions that affect a large proportion of the population and generate significant social and economic costs.

**Vascular diseases** must be recognized as a distinct and essential component of public health strategies, capable of making a solid contribution to reducing premature mortality, increasing years of active life, preventing health deterioration and the risk of severe outcomes, reducing social costs, and improving patients' quality of life safe and active ageing and engagement in health protection.

Vascular diseases represent a unique and integrated area encompassing conditions of the arteries, veins, lymphatics, microcirculation and vascular anomalies, mostly connected to the major risk factors.

Despite being easily diagnosable and generally responsive to treatment, they remain **under-recognized and underrepresented in public health policies and data systems**.

VAS highlights the strong alignment between the WHO framework's priorities and vascular health needs, and the existing capacity of vascular networks to produce concrete results even with limited institutional support:

- **Prevention.** Primary prevention is effective in most vascular diseases, which, as other NCDs, are strongly influenced by lifestyle. Secondary prevention offers significant potential for reducing acute events and, in some cases, achieving near eradication of specific conditions (like vascular amputations).
- **Ageing – “Ageing is living.”** The prevalence of vascular diseases increases with age. The frequent association with depression, social isolation and frailty calls for integrated, community-based solutions linking therapies, prevention and social participation. Easy early diagnosis is mandatory as well as availability of proper care.
- **Children – “A healthy start for a healthy life.”** Promoting vascular health from childhood contributes to long-term prevention of NCDs , also supporting the early recognition and management of paediatric vascular conditions.

- **Innovation.** A strategic approach to innovation in public health should include patient-centred clinical support and harmonized data collection and digital health tools, useful in vascular diseases and integrated therapies. Data on vascular disease are not properly represented, diluted in the “cardiovascular” term .
- **Equity – “No one left behind.”** The limited consideration of vascular diseases across health systems, data, research, awareness and expertise dissemination represents an equity gap that must be addressed through coordinated policy action and network strengthening.

**“The vision underpinning the new framework is for people to TRUST** that they will receive the right care at the right time, in the right place, from the right person, without experiencing financial hardship” (N. Azzopardi Muscat- H.H.P. Kluge WHO -[www.thelancet.com](http://www.thelancet.com) Vol 49 February, 2025) To be realized, vascular patients, health workers of this area and future preventable patients need to be considered in the upcoming and future plans.

**VAS remains committed to supporting WHO and its Member States** in implementing the Framework for Resilient and Sustainable Health Systems 2025–2030, ensuring that **vascular health is fully integrated into public health strategies across the European Region** in line with the principle of equity and universality of care.

***More detailed contributions have been provided in the following VAS documents:***

- VAS Statement to the WHO European Regional Meeting (2024)*
- VAS Proposals for WHO EPW2 Implementation on Vascular Diseases (2025)*
- VAS- Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) — Reducing the Gaps, Defending Equity. A Call for Action in Public Health Strategies.*