

World Heart Federation

RC75

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY FOR THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION

2016-2025

PROGRESS REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 12

Honourable Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

The World Heart Federation commends WHO and Member States for the progress achieved in implementing the *Physical Activity Strategy for the WHO European Region 2016-2025*, which has laid a strong foundation for healthier and more active populations.

Yet, physical inactivity remains a pressing public health challenge in the European region. As a leading risk factor for noncommunicable diseases, especially cardiovascular disease, it increases the relative risk of **hypertension**, **coronary artery disease**, and **stroke** by **30%**, **45%**, and **60%** respectively. Globally, nearly **500 million new cases of preventable NCDs** are projected between 2020 and 2030 as a **direct consequence of physical inactivity** – representing an economic burden exceeding 300 billion USD.

Physical activity is a **cornerstone** of cardiovascular health, offering benefits that extend far beyond individual well-being. Regular exercise also helps prevent and manage type 2 diabetes, cancer, and dementia, as well as mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. It promotes social connection and contributes to lower health system costs. Establishing physical activity habits early in life is particularly essential, as childhood and adolescence are critical periods for shaping lifelong behaviours that help prevent NCDs later in life.

The World Heart Federation urges Member States to:

- Integrate physical activity across national NCD strategies, urban planning, education, and transport policies. In particular, implement the [WHO ACTIVE](#) measures and the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity;
- Foster environments that deliver **co-benefits** and promote **health equity** through intersectoral policies and interventions that reduce air pollution, promote healthy lifestyles, and support **active transportation**, with a strong focus on addressing social, commercial, and environmental determinants of health;
- Strengthen national physical activity monitoring systems in line with the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity targets; and
- Adopt and implement the forthcoming European Cardiovascular Health Action Plan.

We also call on Member States to consider **extending** the *Physical Activity Strategy for the WHO European Region* to 2030 to align with the [WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030](#).

In the European Region, the [WHO Quick Buys](#), built on the WHO Best Buys, offer a suite of proven, cost-effective interventions to reduce tobacco use, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets, and **physical inactivity** while addressing cardiovascular disease. These measures can deliver measurable public health benefits **within five years**.

To support global efforts, the [WHF Policy Brief on Physical Activity](#) may serve as a practical tool to guide implementation.

Thank you.

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