



ESC

European Society
of Cardiology

European Society of Cardiology response to the public consultation on the proposal for a regulation to reinforce the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) fully supports the initiative to reinforce the mandate of the ECDC and calls for the mandate to be extended beyond communicable diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed clearly demonstrated that communicable and non-communicable diseases are closely intertwined and that the collateral damage to patients with non-communicable diseases needs to be evaluated to assess the potential threat to human health that a pandemic may trigger.

Evidence collected on cardiovascular diseases (CVD) during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that the pandemic had a dramatic impact on CVD patients in terms of mortality and morbidity.

The re-prioritisation of hospital resources during the pandemic has led to the drastic reduction of availability of appropriate healthcare services for patients with non-communicable diseases. The considerable impact on CVD services was confirmed by an ESC large scale survey, with around 50% of the respondents reporting that their ward or department has been restructured due to the pandemic¹. The resulting massive reduction in cardiology procedures will have a significant impact on CVD mortality and morbidity beyond the pandemic.

Evidence from European and US registries also showed a 25% to 40% average reduction in heart attack hospital presentations during the outbreak due to fear of going to hospital and thus heart attacks happening at home.

Equally important, CVD patients infected with COVID-19 have increased rates of complications and death. Monitoring CVD risk factors and effective primary and secondary CVD prevention could have helped mitigate COVID-19 related mortality and would limit the possibility of collateral damage in future pandemics. Awareness of the prevalence of risk factors in the age groups would contribute to a better definition of populations at risk and to improve the design of vaccination programmes.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed regional differences in the capacity and effectiveness of healthcare systems/providers, as well as cross-border solidarity in treating COVID-19 patients. An effective EU surveillance system could have helped alleviate pressure on healthcare systems related to both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 healthcare services.

Our mission: to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease.

Headquarters: The European Heart House - Les Templiers - 2035, Route des Colles - CS 80179 BIOT - 06903 Sophia Antipolis Cedex - France
Tel. +33 (0)4 92 94 76 00 - Fax. +33 (0)4 92 94 76 01 - www.escardio.org

European Heart Agency: 29, Square de Meeus - 4th floor - B-1000 Brussels - Belgium - Tel. +32 (0)2 274 10 70

SOCIÉTÉ EUROPÉENNE DE CARDIOLOGIE Association loi 1901 - Déclaration du 08/04/1992 N° 1/10006 J.O. N° 18 du 29/04/1992 - SIREN 403 299 480
Association immatriculée au registre des opérateurs de voyages n° IM006110075



European Society
of Cardiology

Moreover, communicable diseases (other than COVID-19) i.e., HIV or HIV treatment, antimicrobial resistance related to infective endocarditis, Lyme disease etc. often cause cardiovascular complications. Therefore, the ECDC should also look into the cardiovascular consequences triggered by communicable diseases to effectively manage those diseases.

Tackling health inequalities is now more urgent than ever. Effective planning and targeting of health investment to reduce inequalities and improve prevention and management of pre-existing chronic diseases, especially in socially and medically vulnerable groups, is of paramount importance. Hence, the need of reliable data at EU level to plan, direct, and coordinate programmes to tackle major chronic diseases.

These tasks may be effectively fulfilled by the ECDC through an extension of its mandate.

More specifically, the European Society of Cardiology calls for the creation of an agile and rapidly responsive EU health-data collection system to:

- support population-based EU policy in CVD and other major non-communicable diseases
- assist the development of programs for CVD and other major non-communicable diseases prevention
- conduct epidemiologic investigations across the EU
- disseminate information from established CVD surveillance systems
- efficiently respond to current and emerging threats to human health posed by non-communicable diseases, either directly or indirectly, by increasing risks associated with communicable diseases.

ESC expresses its full support to such action and is ready to serve with the expertise of its members to establish a fully functioning system.

About the European Society of Cardiology

The European Society of Cardiology brings together health care professionals from more than 150 countries, working to advance cardiovascular medicine and help people lead longer, healthier lives. www.escardio.org

Our mission: to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease.

Headquarters: The European Heart House - Les Templiers - 2035, Route des Colles - CS 80179 BIOT - 06903 Sophia Antipolis Cedex - France
Tel. +33 (0)4 92 94 76 00 - Fax. +33 (0)4 92 94 76 01 - www.escardio.org

European Heart Agency: 29, Square de Meeus - 4th floor - B-1000 Brussels - Belgium - Tel. +32 (0)2 274 10 70

SOCIETE EUROPEENNE DE CARDIOLOGIE Association loi 1901 - Déclaration du 08/04/1992 N° 1/10006 J.O. N° 18 du 29/04/1992 - SIREN 403 299 480
Association immatriculée au registre des opérateurs de voyages n° IM006110075