



PRESS RELEASE - Launch of the Exposome Alliance in the European Parliament on 24 February 2026

European lawmakers, leading scientists and civil society organisations launch the Exposome Alliance to put prevention at the heart of EU policy

Brussels, 24 February 2026 — Members of the European Parliament, leading researchers and major European health organisations today launched the Exposome Alliance at the European Parliament, marking a coordinated effort to tackle the environmental and social drivers of Europe’s growing chronic disease burden and shift EU policy decisively towards prevention.

Convened by **MEP Christophe Clergeau** (S&D, France), the event brought together policymakers, scientists and civil society organisations around a shared objective: reducing cancer, cardiovascular, respiratory and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by addressing the lifelong exposures that drive them and ensure citizen age healthy.

Speakers highlighted the growing scientific consensus on the exposome — the totality of environmental, chemical, social and lifestyle exposures that shape health across the life course and are estimated to account for up to 90% of health negative outcomes.

The Alliance presented three strategic priorities for the EU’s next Multiannual Financial Framework: a €1 billion “Mission Exposome” under Horizon Europe including a 10 million person EU longitudinal cohort; the creation of a European Exposome Data Space to securely link health, environmental and social data across borders; and the establishment of an EU Common Prevention Pillar to better coordinate action on upstream determinants of non-communicable diseases.

Opening the conference, **Prof. Roel Vermeulen, co-chair of the Alliance**, stressed the scientific urgency:

“Europe has the talent and tools. What we now need is a coordinated effort to measure real-world exposures at scale — because prevention starts with understanding what surrounds us.”

MEP Christophe Clergeau, initiator of the Alliance, stated:

“Europe must shift from treating disease to preventing it. The exposome offers the knowledge and

data we need to act on the root causes of ill health — where we live, how we live, where and how we work, the pollutions and hazardous chemicals we are exposed to across our entire lifespan. With this Alliance, we are building a coalition between scientists, policy makers and civil society strong enough to ensure prevention becomes a European priority.”

Silvia Ganzerla of **EuroHealthNet** highlighted the inequality dimension of exposure:

“Health inequalities begin with unequal exposure. To protect those most at risk - from children and pregnant women to the elderly and vulnerable communities - we must translate exposome research into concrete policies. We need to uphold the ‘Do No Harm’ principle and ensure actions for disease prevention leave no one behind.”

Focusing on infrastructure, **Prof. Jana Klanova** emphasised:

“Without interoperable, high quality environmental and health data, prevention policies cannot be effectively designed or evaluated. A European Exposome Data Space is essential.”

MEP Tomislav Sokol added the political dimension to data integration:

“Prevention starts with knowledge, and knowledge starts with data. Europe must connect and use all relevant data to protect citizens before disease strikes.”

Damien Weidert, representative of Aéma Groupe highlighted the importance of exposome data from an insurance and risk perspective: “Chronic diseases place an enormous financial strain on health systems and insurers alike. Exposome data allows us to move from managing costs to managing causes. That is a win for citizens, for public health, for the sustainability of our solidarity-based welfare model, and for the competitiveness of our Union.”

Prof. Martine Vrijheid underlined Europe’s leadership potential:

“We already have world class scientists, strong environmental legislation, and major digital investments. If Europe scales up exposome science, we can create the most comprehensive prevention infrastructure in the world.”

As highlighted by **MEP Marta Temido**, “We are calling for a European Mission on the Exposome: under Horizon Europe, a €1 billion longitudinal study of 10 million Europeans for 10 years.”

She added: “What does this mean for the European people? More effective treatments and healthier societies.”

Echoing the need for an ambitious and structured approach, **MEP Michalis Hadjipantela** called for a dedicated research mission: “Europe has the scientific talent to lead the world in understanding the full range of environmental, social and biological exposures shaping our health. Launching a Mission Exposome with a longitudinal cohort of 10 million Europeans would turn that knowledge into actionable prevention, strengthen our research ecosystem, and give citizens the tools to live healthier lives.”

Disease-specific organisations supporting the Alliance highlighted the concrete health impact of cumulative exposures. **Prof. Zorana Jovanovic Andersen** of the **European Respiratory Society** warned:

“Air pollution remains Europe’s most harmful environmental exposure, and one of the leading risk factors for lung diseases, causing or exacerbating asthma, COPD, lung cancer, and infections. Exposome research can help us understand combined effects of air pollution with climate, housing, and social factors — and guide better policy.”

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC), a member of the Alliance supporting its launch, also stressed the cardiovascular dimension. **Prof. Münzel** stated:

“Up to 90% of cardiovascular risk is driven by environment and behavior. If Europe is serious about prevention, the exposome must become central to cardiovascular policy — not a footnote.”

MEP Tilly Metz summarised the political ambition:

“Europe cannot afford to act only after disease strikes. We need a framework to coordinate and support Member States in their efforts to step up prevention against the combined, lifelong exposures driving all major NCDs. A common prevention pillar, grounded in exposome science, would tackle the full range of environmental, social, and biological exposures driving chronic illness, from pollution and unhealthy environments to social inequalities, and make prevention the guiding principle across all policies. By understanding and acting on these exposures upstream, we can protect citizens, reduce healthcare costs, and build healthier, more resilient societies.”

Wolfgang Fecke of the Association of European Cancer Leagues concluded:

"Cancer prevention is not just a matter of personal responsibility – it is a shared commitment that requires coordinated EU-wide action. Investing in research on how environmental and lifestyle exposures interact can drive smarter policies and help stop cancer before it begins."

The Exposome Alliance brings together policymakers, researchers, civil society and European health associations committed to making prevention a defining pillar of the European Union’s health and research agenda.

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