# Exposome Alliance Launch – Summary Report
# European Parliament | Brussels 24 February 2026

## 1. Introduction & Key Takeaways

The launch of the Exposome Alliance brought together Members of the European Parliament, leading scientists, and civil society organisations to emphasise the need to place environmental and social exposures at the heart of Europe's health, research, and prevention agenda.

In a context where 80-90% of chronic disease risk is linked to the exposome, and where Europe is preparing its next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), political and scientific leaders gathered to demonstrate that the EU has both the evidence and the capacity to act decisively on upstream determinants of health.

The event highlighted Europe's global leadership in exposome science, the growing political momentum for prevention, and the strategic importance of building an integrated European Exposome Data Space, a European mission on the Exposome, and a coordinated EU Prevention Pillar.

- **Chronic diseases are largely preventable**: up to 90% of disease risk stems from environmental, lifestyle, and social exposures.
- **Exposome science is ready for implementation**: Europe already has tools, datasets, infrastructures, and global leadership.
- **Health inequalities reflect exposure inequalities**, with vulnerable and low income groups facing disproportionate environmental burdens.
- A **pan-European prevention approach** based on the exposome would strengthen health, reduce inequalities, and support economic resilience.
- The EU has a unique opportunity to build:
    - **European Exposome Data Space**
    - **A Exposome Mission under Horizon Europe**
    - **An EU Common Prevention Pillar** linking policies across sectors.
- The Alliance gathers scientifics, civil society, and cross-party MEPs committed to moving from knowledge to action.

## 2. Summary per intervention

### Prof. Roel Vermeulen, Chair of the Exposome Alliance, University of Utrecht, Netherlands

Vermeulen stressed that chronic diseases are shaped by the environments in which Europeans live and work. Exposome science shows that 80–90% of risk is preventable. Europe can already measure a wide range of exposures (air pollution, chemicals, social conditions) and identify high impact prevention opportunities. He emphasized the need for a **European Exposome Data Space**, a **largescale mission**, and a **coherent EU Common Prevention Pillar**, arguing that knowledge must be translated into policy.

### MEP Christophe Clergeau, S&D, France, Initiator of the Exposome Alliance

Clergeau framed the movement as a **"prevention revolution"** rooted in the STOA report on human exposome research, and growing crossparty consensus. He highlighted the convergence of scientific, civil society, and political actors around concrete objectives-: launching an **Exposome Mission**, developing a European health and exposome **data infrastructure**, and establishing a **transversal prevention programme** within the new MFF. He described the Alliance as informal, but action -driven.

### Silvia Ganzerla, EuroHealthNet

Ganzerla underlined that health in Europe is not improving and inequalities are widening, costing an estimated **9% of EU GDP**. Unequal exposure to pollution and unhealthy environments drives health gaps: low-income households and vulnerable groups experience higher cumulative exposures. She argued that exposome-based prevention with **equity at the centre** is a high return investment that strengthens social cohesion.

### Prof. Jana Klanová, RECETOX, Masaryk University, Czech Republic

Klanová described Europe's long-term investment in exposome research, culminating in the **EIRENE research infrastructure**, now part of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) roadmap with 25 countries committed. Europe has the tools, capacity, and political momentum to scale up exposome research. She noted international recognition of Europe's leadership and stated that the remaining step is political will**.**

### MEP Tomislav Sokol, EPP, Croatia

Sokol emphasised the importance of **interoperable, comparable health data**, referencing lessons from COVID19. The European Health Data Space (EHDS) can enable evidence-based decision making for prevention, research, and treatment. He underlined cross border pollution challenges and called for policies grounded in **scientific evidence and robust data**, avoiding ideological approaches.

### Damien Weidert, Aéma Groupe, France

Weidert highlighted the growing **financial and social unsustainability** of health systems due to chronic diseases, which account for 86% of deaths and ~80% of spending. Mutualist insurers see a looming risk of **uninsurability** if environmental risks remain unaddressed. Prevention requires **robust exposome data**, as prevention "must become a strategy, not an intention".

He supported a European exposome data space and a prevention capacity indicator in the European Semester.

**Prof. Martine Vrijheid, Barcelona Institute for Global Health, ISGlobal, Spain**

Vrijheid recalled that Europe built exposome science through early EU framework investments, followed by major support under Horizon 2020 and the development of infrastructures such as EIRENE Research Infrastructure. As a result, Europe now has **world-class datasets**, mature tools, and strong scientific expertise. Through the International Human Exposome Network funded by Horizon Europe, Europe has built a global network of over 700 members and is shaping the future research roadmap. This puts Europe in a position not only to lead globally, but to **move toward large-scale implementation** of exposome science as a foundation for prevention.

**MEP Marta Temido, S&D, Portugal**

Temido stressed that 70-90% of disease risk is environmental and highlighted the need to understand cumulative exposures across life. She proposed a **10-year cohort of 10 million citizens**, with **€1 billion** investment, as part of a European Exposome Mission. She described concrete benefits for children, workers, and patients, framing the mission as a **transformative opportunity** for public health and competitiveness.

**Prof. Zorana Jovanovic Andersen, European Respiratory Society (ERS)**

Andersen underlined that air pollution is the second leading risk factor for lung diseases after tobacco, and a major driver of inequalities. Climate change multiplies exposure burdens (heatwaves, wildfires, dust storms, floods). Exposome science offers a **framework to understand complex combined exposures**, essential for improving lung health outcomes.

**MEP Tilly Metz, Greens/EFA, Luxembourg**

Metz argued for moving beyond fragmented, disease specific approaches toward a **common EU prevention pillar** grounded in exposome science. Such a pillar would act upstream, addressing the determinants that shape health over the life course, early life exposures, pollution, food environments, housing conditions, and social inequalities, rather than intervening only once disease appears. She underlined that prevention is not only a health imperative but also an **economic strategy**, essential to reduce the growing burden of chronic disease and to strengthen Europe's resilience, productivity, and competitiveness.

**Dr. Wolfgang Fecke, Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)**

Fecke highlighted the scale of cancer burden in Europe (1.3 million deaths in 2022; one death every nine seconds). With **40% of cancers preventable**, coordinated EU action is essential. Prevention requires reducing risk factors, improving vaccination, and limiting environmental exposures. A shared database and stronger research framework are key.

## 3. Highlights from the Press Q&A

- **Waste water directive question**: Sokol emphasised the need for a thorough, independent impact assessment to avoid unintended consequences like medicine shortages, steep price rises, or increased reliance on imports from countries with lower environmental standards. He stressed that environmental goals must be balanced with protecting patient access and Europe's strategic autonomy. MEPs insisted that **health must become a top EU priority**, with adequate budgets.
- **MEP Hadjipantela, EPP, Cyprus,** highlighted the unity across political groups in the SANT committee on health issues, emphasising a shared commitment to fighting cancer. He expressed strong EPP support for the initiative, stressing the importance of basing decisions on solid scientific data.
- Several MEPs emphasised **cross-party collaboration** in SANT/ENVI on health issues.
- The discussion highlighted the role of **civil society and journalists** in maintaining pressure and visibility.
- Calls for removing **conflicts of interest** across health relevant sectors.
- Strong emphasis on the need for **policy coherence**, linking environment, health, and industrial policy.

## 4. Conclusion

The launch event showed strong alignment across science, policy, and civil society around a clear ambition: to make Europe a global leader in prevention by acting on the exposome. With mature scientific tools, established infrastructures, and broad political support, the EU now has an opportunity to build a **comprehensive prevention system** that improves health, reduces inequalities, and strengthens Europe's resilience. The Exposome Alliance will work to advance this agenda in the coming years and invites all stakeholders to join the effort.