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### Heart Disease: Europe's Number One Killer

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The European Parliament has called on the EU Member States and the European Commission to tackle today's biggest killer in Europe: Cardiovascular disease. MEPs believe prevention strategies, public awareness campaigns, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles is urgently needed.

Cardiovascular disease accounts for 1.9 million deaths each year, i.e. 42 percent of all fatalities in the EU, generating costs of €169 billion, of which €105 billion are for treating the condition in the EU and €64 billion are attributable to lost productivity and the cost of informal care. No better illustration is needed of the economic value of preventive healthcare.

Parliament asks the Commission to bring forward a policy recommendation:

- To promote regular exchanges of experience and data between all those involved in combating these diseases and
- to encourage tobacco and alcohol controls, better dietary habits and more physical activity, with a view to preventing obesity and high blood pressure.

Member States are urged to review national public health strategies so as to include health promotion as well as early high-risk management strategies on cardiovascular health, and to develop health impact assessments to measure the burden of these ailments on national healthcare systems.

It also calls on the EU "to encourage the equipment of large public spaces, such as railway and metro stations, airports and stadia, with pre-hospital system care such as early defibrillation for victims of cardiac arrest".

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