

## UEG Response to Call for Evidence on the EU Cardiovascular Health Plan

September 12, 2025

United European Gastroenterology (UEG), representing over 50,000 digestive health specialists across all European member states, welcomes the European Commission's initiative to develop a European Cardiovascular Plan. We strongly support this effort to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease (CVD), which remains the leading cause of death and disability in Europe.

We urge the Commission to ensure that the Plan fully recognises the close interconnections between digestive health and cardiovascular health and integrates strategies that address these links.

### 1. Digestive health is integral to cardiovascular health

Digestive and cardiovascular diseases share multiple, preventable risk factors – including obesity, diabetes, alcohol use, unhealthy diets, smoking and sedentary lifestyles. Liver disease, inflammatory bowel disease, obesity-related digestive conditions and microbiome alterations all significantly increase cardiovascular risk. Tackling these areas together is essential for effective prevention. In particular, cardiovascular problems are closely linked to MASLD and MASH (metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease and steatohepatitis, formerly known as NAFLD and NASH). This hepatological dimension is currently under-recognised and should be explicitly addressed within the Cardiovascular Plan.

### 2. Prevention and early detection

Digestive health interventions can reduce the cardiovascular disease burden. Policies to reduce alcohol-related harm, address obesity and promote healthy diets will deliver dual benefits. UEG therefore calls for stronger EU investment in prevention, lifestyle measures, and early detection that cover various organ systems.

### 3. Multidisciplinary and patient-centred care

CVD rarely exists in isolation. Many patients live with multimorbidity, including digestive diseases. The Plan should support integrated, multidisciplinary care pathways that bring together gastroenterologists, cardiologists, endocrinologists, oncologists and primary care to provide patient-centred, holistic care.

### 4. Research and innovation

The gut-heart axis and microbiome research are opening promising new avenues for prevention and treatment. UEG recommends that the European Cardiovascular Plan explicitly promotes cross-specialty research funding into shared risk factors and comorbidities, which will accelerate innovation and improve health outcomes.

### 5. Equity across Europe

Both digestive and cardiovascular diseases disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. The Plan should commit to reducing inequalities in prevention, screening, treatment and access to care across EU Member States.

UEG, an organization bringing together healthcare specialists from 17 specialist member societies and 50 national member societies covering all EU member states, stands ready to contribute its expertise, data, and broad professional network to ensure that the European Cardiovascular Plan is holistic, equitable, and impactful. By integrating digestive health considerations, the EU will deliver stronger prevention, improved care, and better quality of life for millions of Europeans.

## UEG calls for the European Cardiovascular Plan to:

- **Integrate digestive health into prevention and early detection strategies**, recognising shared risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, alcohol- and smoking-related harm and unhealthy diets.
- **Strengthen EU-level action on alcohol and unhealthy nutrition harm reduction**, tackling the major drivers of both digestive and cardiovascular diseases.
- **Embed early detection in primary care**, with systematic identification of high-risk digestive diseases – particularly MASLD and MASH (formerly NAFLD and NASH), which significantly increase cardiovascular risk.
- **Implement multidisciplinary, patient-centred care pathways**, fostering collaboration across specialties and reducing fragmentation in chronic disease management.
- **Prioritise cross-specialty research and innovation**, with EU funding for studies on shared risk factors, comorbidities, the gut-heart axis as well as new diagnostics and digital tools.
- **Ensure equitable access and outcomes across Europe**, guaranteeing consistent prevention, diagnosis, treatment and funding for all EU Member States.

We thank the Commission for this important initiative and look forward to collaborating on its development and implementation.

## About UEG

Founded in 1992, United European Gastroenterology (UEG) is the leading non-profit organisation for excellence in digestive health in Europe and beyond, with its headquarters in Vienna. We improve the prevention and care of digestive diseases in Europe through providing top tier education, supporting research and advancing clinical standards.

As Europe's home for multidisciplinary gastroenterology, we unite over 50,000 engaged professionals from national and specialist societies, individual digestive health experts and related scientists from all fields. With our innovative online platform, the [UEG Community](#), we enable digestive health professionals from across the globe to connect and benefit from a plethora of outstanding free resources and educational activities. Our offers include UEG Week, our annual congress, online and face-to-face educational experiences, research support, a scientific journal and a range of opportunities in the form of fellowships and grants. We provide numerous guidelines, standards and quality improvement initiatives and campaign at the European level to ensure continued resources for research into digestive health while working closely with patient organisations.