



**European Union
Statement**

WHO

152nd Executive Board

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Item 6 - Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and mental health

Geneva, 1 February 2023

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EU Statement

Chair,

Director-General,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

This statement is made on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

The candidate countries Türkiye, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Armenia align themselves with this statement.

EU recognises the major disease burden caused by NCDs and mental disorders and supports the work of WHO and MSs in the prevention and control hereof.

* Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

We are concerned that no country is on track to achieve all nine voluntary global targets for 2025, and that in 2019 seven of the 10 leading causes of death globally were NCDs.

Quoting the report: “NCD targets are not just aspirational but achievable”! To achieve the targets, we must increase and accelerate our efforts in the prevention and control of NCDs and mental disorders.

First, we want to highlight, that both in times of pandemics, humanitarian emergencies, conflicts and wars, as in regular times, it is essential to pursue treatment and prevention of NCDs and mental disorders as well as addressing risk factors, including the social and environmental determinants of health. It is also critical that NCD and mental health preparedness and response become part of any emergency response in order to preserve essential health service delivery at any time.

Second, improvement of equitable access to a full range of essential health services is necessary to address NCDs.

Third, ambitious and sustainable health programmes and “health in all policies” strategies, designed using one health approach, are critical in tackling underlying risks factors of NCDs. At the same time, strengthening multisectoral action, increased prevention, and research are needed to tackle the growing challenge of NCDs.

EU and its Member States support WHO's efforts of to develop “best buys” that could be used by countries, based on their epidemiological situation, needs and priorities.

Many NCDs share the same determinants and risk factors, thus we consider that the continued approach of comprehensively addressing NCDs as a group is essential to avoid the development of vertical disease-specific structures.

Nevertheless, we accept that in some cases exceptions from this principle may be necessary, as in the case of promotion of mental health and addressing mental disorders due to their increase, especially among children and adolescents.

Mental health remains one of the most neglected areas of health calling for coordinated and multisectoral action, with full involvement of people with lived experience and a focus on community-based approaches.

Ensuring accessible and high-quality mental health services free of stigma and discrimination is key to achieving universal health coverage and we encourage WHO to strengthen the efforts for mental health and have a greater focus on information sharing and de-stigmatization efforts.