



Open Letter to the EU Permanent Delegation to the World Health Assembly

EU's support to the draft resolution 'Promoting and prioritizing an integrated lung health approach'

Brussels, 29 April 2025

Dear Ms Knudsen, Head of Delegation,
Dear Mr Beviglia Zampetti, Minister-Counsellor,
Dear Ms Stankevičienė, Counsellor,
Dear Ms Brent-Petersen, Counsellor,
Dear Ms Fohgrub, Counsellor,
Dear Mr Widstam, Counsellor,
Dear Mr. Datus, Counsellor,

The European Lung Health Group (ELHG) is an informal group of nine European level patients and healthcare professional's organisations gathering 179 member associations across 34 European countries¹.

In view of the upcoming 78th World Health Assembly, taking place between 19 and 27 of May in Geneva, the **ELHG calls on you to support and co-sponsor the draft resolution 'Promoting and prioritizing an integrated lung health approach'**², which is to be considered for adoption during the meeting.

Even before COVID-19, lung diseases were some of Europe's biggest killers, despite many of them being preventable and/or manageable. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 1 in 8 deaths in the EU are due to respiratory diseases³. Among chronic respiratory diseases (CRD), in the WHO European Region, 42.7 million people live with asthma and 40.4 million live with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)⁴. Meanwhile, we see an increase in genetic conditions like cystic fibrosis (CF) and in infectious diseases, like tuberculosis (TB), where nearly 37 000 people were diagnosed in the EU/EEA in 2023⁵. Current measures to increase awareness and prevent risks show limitations, as countries are unable to contain disease progress⁶.

The draft resolution on **'Promoting and prioritizing an integrated lung health approach'** focuses on chronic, infectious and rare respiratory diseases, including, asthma, COPD, TB, pneumonia, influenza, COVID-19, pulmonary fibrosis, lung cancer and many others. It prioritizes the perspective of patients and their caregivers in all aspects of prevention, diagnosis, planning and implementation.

The draft resolution proposes to address lung diseases in an integrated manner, emphasising the following elements⁷:

1. **Global Action Plan** to establish a framework for addressing both communicable and non-communicable respiratory diseases globally, focusing on patient safety, prevention, early detection, effective diagnosis, treatment, and long-term care, with specific targets.





2. **Call for dedicated health investment** to expand expertise through training, particularly among primary health care workers, enabling timely diagnosis and effective support for those living with respiratory diseases.
3. **Promote equitable access** to quality, safe, efficacious, effective and affordable diagnosis, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines.

CRDs are one of the five priorities of the European Commission Healthier Together Initiative⁸. The Belgian Council conclusions⁹ (2024) call for the NCD initiative to implement action plans on CRDs. The 2011 Polish Presidency delivered Council recommendations on CRDs in children¹⁰. Given the EU's continuous commitments to CRDs, we believe your involvement can significantly **amplify this critical health issue on the global stage and foster effective strategies to mitigate the burden of lung health worldwide and in Europe.**

We therefore encourage you to:

- support Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, China, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Palestine, Qatar, Romania, Thailand and Vanuatu, in bringing this resolution forward,
- circulate this open letter to the EU Member States and encouraging them to adopt the resolution,
- consider issuing an EU statement during the WHA advocating for the prioritisation of lung health in EU's health policies and research initiatives.

We firmly believe that the **EU has a unique power for improving respiratory and lung disease prevention and care**, sharing knowledge and best practices and steering research and community action grants.

The European Lung Health Group would be delighted to have a meeting with you ahead of the vote, to present the work of our community of lung disease patients.

We thank you in advance for your consideration and look forward to your response.

The European Lung Health Group





Signatories



Cystic Fibrosis (CF-Europe)

CEO, Hilde De Keyser



European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA)

Director, Susanna Palkonen



European Lung Foundation (ELF)

Chair, Dimitris Kontopidis



European Pulmonary Fibrosis Federation (EU-PFF)

CEO, Liam Galvin



European Respiratory Society (ERS)

Advocacy Council Chair, Barbara Hoffmann



Lung Cancer Europe (LuCE)

President, Debra Montague



Pulmonary Hypertension Association Europe (PHA-E)

Project Manager, Hall Skaara



Tuberculosis Coalition Europe (TBEC)

Chair, Paul Sommerfeld





¹European Lung Health Group. <https://breathevision.eu/about#who-we-are>

²Draft decision proposed by Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, China, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Palestine, Qatar, Romania, Thailand and Vanuatu, item 7, EB156/CONF./5, Feb 2025. [Promoting and prioritizing an integrated lung health approach](#)

³European Lung Health Group. Keep Breathing. A vision for EU action on lung health 2024 - 2029.2024. [https://breathevision.eu/images/A_vision_for_EU_action_on_lung_health_2024-2029 - KeepBreathing_publication.pdf](https://breathevision.eu/images/A_vision_for_EU_action_on_lung_health_2024-2029_-_KeepBreathing_publication.pdf)

⁴International Respiratory Coalition. Latest IRC” Lung Facts” demonstrate immense impact of respiratory disease across Europe. <https://international-respiratory-coalition.org/articles/latest-irc-lung-facts-demonstrate-immense-impact-of-respiratory-disease-across-europe/>

⁵WHO. Childhood tuberculosis cases rise by 10%> a disturbing wake-up call for the European region. Mar 2025. <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/24-03-2025-childhood-tuberculosis-cases-rise-by-10-a-disturbing-wake-up-call-for-european-region#:~:text=The%202025%20%E2%80%9CTuberculosis%20surveillance%20and,WHO%20European%20Region%2C%20representing%20a>

⁶WHO. NCD global monitoring framework. <https://www.who.int/teams/ncds/surveillance/monitoring-capacity/gmf>

⁷Global Allergy and Airways Patient Platform. Lung Health Resolution. <https://gaapp.org/lunghealthresolution>

⁸European Commission. EU Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) initiative: Guidance document, Jun 2022. https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/eu-non-communicable-diseases-ncds-initiative-guidance-document_en

⁹Council of the European Union. General Secretariat of the Council. Draft Council conclusions on the Future of the European Health Union: A Europe that cares, prepares and protects. May 2024. <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9900-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

¹⁰Council of the European Union. Council conclusions on prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of chronic respiratory diseases in children. Dec 2011. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/126522.pdf

