



Launch of the Exposome Alliance

Programme & Speakers

Press conference – 24 February 2026

08:10 – 08:13	Opening – Scientific consensus on the exposome and the urgency to act	Prof. Roel Vermeulen
08:13 – 08:16	Political Mobilisation: MEPs commitment to put the exposome on the EU agenda	MEP Clergeau
08:16 – 08:19	Reducing exposure, reducing inequality: making prevention fair in Europe EuroHealthNet	Silvia Ganzerla
08:19 – 08:22	From data to decisions: the infrastructures Europe needs for prevention	Prof. Jana Klanova
08:22 – 08:25	Building a European Exposome Data Space	MEP Sokol
08:25 – 08:28	From Risk to insight: why exposome data matters to insurers Aéma Groupe	Damien Weidert
08:28 – 08:31	Europe as global scientific leader in exposome research	Prof. Martine Vrijheid
08:31 – 08:34	A European Mission on the Exposome: putting prevention at the heart of EU research	MEP Hadjipantela
08:34 – 08:37	Clean air and lung health: why Europe must scale up exposome research European Respiratory Society	Prof. Zorana Jovanovic Andersen
08:37 – 08:40	Child health: why prevention must start early	Prof. Robert Barouki
08:40 –	Towards an EU Common Prevention Pillar	MEP Tilly Metz

08:43		
08:43 – 08:46	Cancer prevention starts long before diagnosis Association of European Cancer Leagues	Wolfgang Fecke
08:46 – 09:30	Press Questions & Answers	All panellists

Speakers

MEPs Alliance Members

MEP Christophe Clergeau, S&D, France

Vice president of the Socialists & Democrats group
Member of the ENVI Committee
Member of the SANT Committee

MEP Tomislav Sokol, EPP, Croatia

Co-Chair of the [Intergroup on Cancer and Rare Diseases](#)
Member of the SANT Committee

MEP Michalis Hadjipantela, EPP, Cyprus

Member of the SANT Committee
MEP Marta Temido, S&D, Portugal
Member of the ENVI Committee Substitute in SANT Committee
Member of the [Intergroup on Cancer and Rare Diseases](#)

MEP Tilly Metz, Greens/EFA, Luxembourg

Co-Chair of the [Intergroup on Cancer and Rare Diseases](#)
Vice-Chair of the SANT Committee
Member of the ENVI Committee

Scientific Alliance Members

Prof. Robert Barouki — Inserm, France

Professor of Biochemistry at Université Paris Cité and director of Inserm Unit 1124 (“Toxicology, Therapeutic Targets, Cellular Signaling and Biomarkers”). Expert in environmental toxicology, exposome science, and the effects of chemical contaminants on human health.

Prof. Jana Klánová — RECETOX, Masaryk University, Czech Republic

Director of the RECETOX Centre (Research Centre for Toxic Compounds in the Environment) at Masaryk University, Czech Republic; expert in environmental chemistry, human exposure pathways and analytical methods for environmental contaminants.

Prof. Roel Vermeulen — Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Professor of Environmental Epidemiology & Exposome Science at the Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences (IRAS), Utrecht University, and at UMC Utrecht. Leads large-scale research on environmental factors and disease risk (exposome).

Prof. Martine Vrijheid — ISGlobal, Spain

Research Professor and Head of the Environment & Health over the Lifecourse programme at ISGlobal (Barcelona Institute for Global Health). Specialises in environmental epidemiology, especially early-life environmental exposures and child health.

Civil Society Alliance Supporters

Dr. Wolfgang Fecke — Executive Director, Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

Executive Director of the **Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)**, a pan-European umbrella organisation coordinating national cancer leagues and advancing cancer prevention and control across Europe. Previously led scientific and research infrastructure roles in Europe.

Prof. Zorana Jovanovic Andersen — Advocacy Council Chair Elect, European Respiratory Society (ERS)

Professor of Environmental Epidemiology and newly elected Chair of the Advocacy Council at the **European Respiratory Society (ERS)**. Experienced in translating air pollution research into policy and advancing lung health at the European level.

Silvia Ganzerla — EuroHealthNet

Policy Manager at **EuroHealthNet**, a public health partnership organisation based in Brussels focusing on health equity, disease prevention, and health promotion across Europe.

Damien Weidert — Aéma Groupe

Chief of Staff to the President of Macif Santé Prévoyance. Representative of the **Aéma groupe** (bio/health sector).

All Alliance Members

Political Leaders

- Christophe Clergeau — Socialists & Democrats, France
- Stine Bosse — Renew Europe Group, Denmark
- Pascal Canfin — Renew Europe Group, France
- Michalis Hadjipantela — European People's Party, Cyprus
- Tilly Metz — Greens, Luxembourg
- Marcos Ros Sempere — Socialists & Democrats, Spain
- Tomislav Sokol — European People's Party, Croatia
- Marta Temido — Socialists & Democrats, Portugal

Scientific Experts

- Roel Vermeulen — University of Utrecht
- Annette Peters — Helmholtz Munich
- Robert Barouki — Inserm
- Jana Klánová — RECETOX
- Martine Vrijheid — ISGlobal
- Zorana Jovanovic Andersen — University of Copenhagen
- Thomas Hankemeier — Leiden University
- Sylvain Sebert — University of Oulu
- Konstantinos Makris — Cyprus International Institute for Environmental and Public Health
- Denis Sarigiannis — Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

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PRESS RELEASE - Launch of the Exposome Alliance in the European Parliament on 24 February 2026

Embargoed until 24 February 2026, 08:15 CET

European lawmakers, leading scientists and civil society organisations launch the Exposome Alliance to put prevention at the heart of EU policy

Brussels, 24 February 2026 — Members of the European Parliament, leading researchers and major European health organisations today launched the Exposome Alliance at the European Parliament, marking a coordinated effort to tackle the environmental and social drivers of Europe’s growing chronic disease burden and shift EU policy decisively towards prevention.

Convened by **MEP Christophe Clergeau** (S&D, France), the event brought together policymakers, scientists and civil society organisations around a shared objective: reducing cancer, cardiovascular, respiratory and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by addressing the lifelong exposures that drive them and ensure citizen age healthy.

Speakers highlighted the growing scientific consensus on the exposome — the totality of environmental, chemical, social and lifestyle exposures that shape health across the life course and are estimated to account for up to 90% of health negative outcomes.

The Alliance presented three strategic priorities for the EU’s next Multiannual Financial Framework: a €1 billion “Mission Exposome” under Horizon Europe including a 10 million person EU longitudinal cohort; the creation of a European Exposome Data Space to securely link health, environmental and social data across borders; and the establishment of an EU Common Prevention Pillar to better coordinate action on upstream determinants of non-communicable diseases.

Opening the conference, **Prof. Roel Vermeulen, co-chair of the Alliance**, stressed the scientific urgency:

“Europe has the talent and tools. What we now need is a coordinated effort to measure real-world exposures at scale — because prevention starts with understanding what surrounds us.”

MEP Christophe Clergeau, initiator of the Alliance, stated:

“Europe must shift from treating disease to preventing it. The exposome offers the knowledge and data we need to act on the root causes of ill health — where we live, how we live, where and how we

work, the pollutions and hazardous chemicals we are exposed to across our entire lifespan. With this Alliance, we are building a coalition between scientists, policy makers and civil society strong enough to ensure prevention becomes a European priority.”

Silvia Ganzerla of **EuroHealthNet** highlighted the inequality dimension of exposure:

“Health inequalities begin with unequal exposure. To protect those most at risk - from children and pregnant women to the elderly and vulnerable communities - we must translate exposome research into concrete policies. We need to uphold the ‘Do No Harm’ principle and ensure actions for disease prevention leave no one behind.”

Focusing on infrastructure, **Prof. Jana Klanova** emphasised:

“Without interoperable, high quality environmental and health data, prevention policies cannot be effectively designed or evaluated. A European Exposome Data Space is essential.”

MEP Tomislav Sokol added the political dimension to data integration:

“Prevention starts with knowledge, and knowledge starts with data. Europe must connect and use all relevant data to protect citizens before disease strikes.”

Damien Weidert, representative of Aéma Groupe highlighted the importance of exposome data from an insurance and risk perspective: “Chronic diseases place an enormous financial strain on health systems and insurers alike. Exposome data allows us to move from managing costs to managing causes. That is a win for citizens, for public health, for the sustainability of our solidarity-based welfare model, and for the competitiveness of our Union.”

Prof. Martine Vrijheid underlined Europe’s leadership potential:

“We already have world class scientists, strong environmental legislation, and major digital investments. If Europe scales up exposome science, we can create the most comprehensive prevention infrastructure in the world.”

MEP Michalis Hadjipantela called for a dedicated research mission:

“Europe has the scientific talent to lead the world in understanding the full range of environmental, social and biological exposures shaping our health. Launching a Mission Exposome with a longitudinal cohort of 10 million Europeans would turn that knowledge into actionable prevention, strengthen our research ecosystem, and give citizens the tools to live healthier lives.”

Disease-specific organisations supporting the Alliance highlighted the concrete health impact of cumulative exposures. **Prof. Zorana Jovanovic Andersen** of the **European Respiratory Society** warned:

“Air pollution remains Europe’s most harmful environmental exposure, and one of the leading risk factors for lung diseases, causing or exacerbating asthma, COPD, lung cancer, and infections. Exposome research can help us understand combined effects of air pollution with climate, housing, and social factors — and guide better policy.”

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC), a member of the Alliance supporting its launch, also stressed the cardiovascular dimension. **Prof. Münzel** stated:

“Up to 90% of cardiovascular risk is driven by environment and behavior. If Europe is serious about prevention, the exposome must become central to cardiovascular policy — not a footnote.”

Prof. Robert Barouki emphasised early-life vulnerability:

“The foundations of lifelong health are built in the first thousand days. If we fail to reduce harmful

exposures in pregnancy and childhood, Europe will face decades of preventable disease. The exposome approach is our best tool to intervene early and equitably.”

MEP Tilly Metz summarised the political ambition:

“Europe cannot afford to act only after disease strikes. We need a framework to coordinate and support Member States in their efforts to step up prevention against the combined, lifelong exposures driving all major NCDs. A common prevention pillar, grounded in exposome science, would tackle the full range of environmental, social, and biological exposures driving chronic illness, from pollution and unhealthy environments to social inequalities, and make prevention the guiding principle across all policies. By understanding and acting on these exposures upstream, we can protect citizens, reduce healthcare costs, and build healthier, more resilient societies.”

Wolfgang Fecke of the Association of European Cancer Leagues concluded:

"Cancer prevention is not just a matter of personal responsibility – it is a shared commitment that requires coordinated EU-wide action. Investing in research on how environmental and lifestyle exposures interact can drive smarter policies and help stop cancer before it begins."

The Exposome Alliance brings together policymakers, researchers, civil society and European health associations committed to making prevention a defining pillar of the European Union’s health and research agenda.

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EXPOSOME ALLIANCE

Priorities & Objectives

The Exposome Alliance aims at positioning the exposome at the heart of Europe's future health, research and prevention agenda: (A) launching a Mission Exposome to transform life-course research and innovation; (B) building a European Exposome Data Space; and (C) establishing an EU Prevention Action Plan to address the root causes of non-communicable diseases across all policies. The objectives of the Alliance are fully aligned with the ambitions of the next Multiannual Financial Framework and should be firmly anchored within EU health spending under the new budget, while Priority B should be supported through the EU's digital leadership and data infrastructure envelopes. Together, these three pillars provide a coherent framework for making prevention, data and exposome science a core driver of EU's health, competitiveness and societal resilience.

A. Support research on exposome and launch a Mission Exposome



To fully leverage the exposome for prevention, innovation, and public health, the EU should establish a **Mission Exposome in Horizon Europe**, with its central pillars being a €1 billion budget dedicated to research on the exposome, and a longitudinal cohort of 10 million participants across the EU, tracking environmental, chemical, biological, and social exposures throughout the life course.

This large-scale initiative would position Europe alongside major international efforts – notably in the United States and China – and would generate unprecedented, population-specific evidence to inform EU prevention policies, support AI-driven risk prediction, and advance personalised and precision medicine.

Combined with the Genome of Europe initiative, a Mission Exposome would create a powerful integrated knowledge base linking genetic, environmental, and social determinants of health. This would significantly strengthen Europe's health, medical research, and biotechnology ecosystems, while supporting the social and economic competitiveness of the EU population.

B. Build a European Exposome Data Space for Prevention



The European Exposome Alliance will call on the Commission to establish a **European exposome data** space that enables the systematic, secure, and interoperable linkage of **health, environmental, social and behavioural data** across the EU in support of **disease prevention, public health, and evidence-based policy**. Inspired by national initiatives such as France's Health–Environment Data Hub, the Alliance will promote a coordinated European framework allowing Member States to connect their health and environmental data infrastructures in a harmonised way.

By making exposomic data visible, usable and interoperable, the Alliance will enable Europe to move beyond treating disease toward **understanding and preventing it**, by analysing how real-world environmental, occupational, lifestyle and social exposures interact with biological and genomic factors across the life course. This will support more effective prevention strategies, better risk identification, and more targeted public health interventions for non-communicable diseases and environmentally driven health risks.

The European Health Data Space (EHDS) and the EU Life Sciences Strategy will serve as key instruments to deliver this objective. The EHDS provides the legal and technical foundation for secure, cross-border use of health data; the Alliance will advocate for the explicit inclusion and operationalisation of **exposomic and environmental datasets** within EHDS implementation, including interoperable standards for linking them to health and genomic data. At the same time, the Life Sciences Strategy's investments in **data infrastructure, AI, genomics and cross-sector data governance** provide a powerful platform to scale up exposome science and integrate it into Europe's research and innovation ecosystem.

C. A common prevention pillar to strengthen prevention



Building on the EU Healthier Together NCD Initiative and other established policy frameworks, this proposal calls on the Commission to **enhance the coordination, coherence, and implementation of existing EU initiatives aimed at preventing non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**. This approach would focus on better aligning current instruments, facilitating synergies across sectoral policies, and supporting Member States in the effective delivery of prevention measures.

While the EU has disease-specific plans and flagship initiatives, it still lacks a framework to **coordinate and support Member States in their efforts to step up prevention** against the combined, lifelong exposures driving all major NCDs. Such coordination should address remaining gaps, including the need to strengthen attention to upstream determinants of health, such as early-life exposures, environmental pollution, unhealthy food environments, housing conditions, occupational risks, and social inequalities, while respecting the national competences in health policy. EU actions should therefore provide added value mainly through coordination, knowledge sharing, joint tools, and supportive funding,

Within this framework and using the exposome approach, the Commission could facilitate **a common prevention pillar** that links and reinforces existing initiatives (including those on cancer, cardiovascular health, environment, chemicals, food systems, urban planning, transport, and social inclusion), ensuring greater policy coherence and more effective use of available resources. By **improving coordination across programmes funded under the next Multiannual Financial Framework** and strengthening implementation support for Member States, the EU would help maximise the impact of current strategies and advance a more preventive, cross-sectoral approach to NCDs.



EXPOSOME ALLIANCE

Launch of an Exposome Alliance

What is the exposome?

The exposome is everything in our environment and daily lives that affects our health – apart from our genes.

It includes the air we breathe, the food we eat, the chemicals we are exposed to, our housing and working conditions, noise, stress, and even social factors like income or education. Where you live, how you live, where and how you work, the pollutions and dangerous products you are exposed to have an impact on your health. These exposures, including their combined “cocktail effects”, contribute to the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory conditions account for most healthcare costs and economic burdens in Europe. While genetics plays a role, research shows that up to 90% of disease risk is linked to environmental and lifestyle factors - many of which are poorly measured, weakly regulated, or entirely preventable. The explosion of NCDs is one of the major reasons behind the acceleration of healthcare spending in Europe, which makes it urgent to invest in the exposome and prevention.

The science that studies these influences is called exposomics. It looks at how multiple environmental exposures combine, accumulate, and affect the body over time. Instead of focusing on one chemical or risk factor at a time, exposomics takes a whole-life, whole-environment approach.

Understanding the exposome can help shift health policy away from reacting to illness and towards preventing disease before it starts. It can inform smarter decisions on chemical safety, urban planning, climate adaptation, workplace health, and healthcare guidelines, ultimately reducing disease, healthcare costs, and inequality.

The European Union is already a global leader in exposome research, through major initiatives. Scientists are now calling for larger population studies, better data sharing, and the responsible use of tools like artificial intelligence to turn exposome science into real-world health protection.



What the Alliance aims to achieve

The Exposome Alliance wants to put prevention at the heart of Europe's future health and research agenda by focusing on the exposome – the combined impact of environmental, social and lifestyle factors on health across a lifetime.

The Alliance is calling for action on three fronts: launching a Mission Exposome, building a European Exposome Data Space, and creating an EU Common Prevention Pillar to tackle the root causes of chronic diseases across all policies. Together, these pillars aim to make prevention, smart data and exposome science central to Europe's health, competitiveness and resilience.

A proposed Mission Exposome, under Horizon Europe, would invest around €1 billion in research and create a long-term study following up to 10 million people across the EU. By tracking environmental, chemical, biological and social exposures over time, the initiative would generate world-leading evidence to guide prevention policies, support AI-based risk prediction and advance personalised medicine. Combined with the Genome of Europe initiative, it would link genetic, environmental and social data, strengthening Europe's health and life sciences ecosystem and keeping pace with the US and China.

The Alliance also calls for a European Exposome Data Space to securely link health, environmental and social data across countries, building on the European Health Data Space and national initiatives already in place. Making these data interoperable would help policymakers identify health risks earlier and design more effective, targeted prevention measures.

Finally, the Alliance is pushing for an EU Common Prevention Pillar to address the shared drivers of non-communicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. While the EU has several disease-specific strategies, it lacks a framework that tackles the combined, lifelong exposures behind them. Using the exposome approach, the Pillar would connect policies on environment, chemicals, food, housing, transport, work and social inequality – shifting EU action from managing disease to preventing it.