



Message from the European Diabetes Forum to the European Commission Directorate General for Research and Innovation

Brussels, July 7, 2020

The commitment from the European Commission to improve the health of European citizens, and to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal 3 (“Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”) is a very welcome and appreciated movement.

We are in an important period of change where health is beginning to gain the recognition it deserves at a political level. It is therefore of the utmost importance that our current evidence-based knowledge of diseases is reflected accurately at this level.

In this regard, we regret to read that in the European Commission’s Interim report of the Mission Board for Cancer, diabetes has been grossly misrepresented as a “lifestyle” disease within ANNEX IV.

This is not just highly disappointing and damaging to the diabetes community, particularly to those living with diabetes themselves but essentially wrong and misleading. This inaccurate description exemplifies the current lack of understanding surrounding this complex disease amongst the public and policymakers alike. It highlights the need for increased awareness, education, and recognition at a political level.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects everyday life, and occurs in many presentations, the principal ones being Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. Neither form of diabetes has a cure, and every 8 seconds, someone dies from a diabetes related complication.

Type 1 diabetes is a life-long disease originating typically in childhood, adolescence or young adulthood, in which the pancreas does not secrete enough or no insulin, needed to control glucose levels. People living with type 1 diabetes are dependent on insulin for their survival and daily efforts balancing food, exercise and insulin are a major challenge.

Type 2 diabetes is a completely different, multi-factorial, complex and progressive disease in which the control or balance between glucose and insulin is reduced or lost.

Common to all forms of diabetes is the impact on quality and quantity of life through the occurrence of severe long-term complications.

Our urgent request to correct the statement that ‘diabetes is a lifestyle disease’ does not diminish the important message in the European Commission’s Interim Report on those living with cancer. On the contrary, we emphasise that in order to improve quality of life in those living with cancer, the co-morbidities that European cancer patients may live with, such as diabetes, must first be recognised as the serious diseases that they are. Moreover, diabetes itself is a risk factor for many forms of cancer, and many cancer treatments are a direct cause of diabetes. No distinction in severity or impact of disease should be made between cancer and diabetes.



**European
Diabetes Forum**

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AISBL**

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About EUDF

The European Diabetes Forum (www.eudf.org) provides a platform uniting stakeholders from across the diabetes landscape in Europe, with as single mission to ensure the translation of research into policy actions towards better diabetes care in Europe with the aim to improve the life of people living with diabetes. Our vision is to enable healthcare systems to cope with the diabetes pandemic, while achieving the best possible outcomes for people with diabetes.

Members include the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD), the European Foundation for the Study of Diabetes (EFSD), the Foundation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND), JDRF and the International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF Europe)



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