

PRESS RELEASE

“Europe cannot afford to sit still”

Brussels, 16 September 2015 — Obesity forms one of the biggest threats to public health in Europe. Efforts to tighten the belt on “the epidemic of the 21st century” should be top priority for all concerned, the EU included. Today, the European Healthy Lifestyle Alliance (EHLA) met during a Strategy meeting in Brussels to exchange the latest data and to call on the EU to move to action.

EHLA wants to underline that obesity is a marker of poor lifestyle habits (low nutritional quality and lack of physical activity). Furthermore, abdominal obesity is the most dangerous form of obesity. More than 50% of the population in Europe is overweight while more than 20% is obese. Obesity is becoming one of the leading causes of death and disability. More people die from the consequences of physical inactivity than smoking. Obesity, particularly abdominal obesity, can lead to a variety of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and forms of cancer.

We are dealing in Europe with costly lifestyle diseases which represent a huge burden for our society and our economy. At today’s meeting, Dr. Martine Duclos, expert from the Hospital Clermont-Ferrand University stated: “Physical inactivity in Europe accounts for 1,5% to 3% of total healthcare costs.” Thus, sitting still has an enormous price that runs up to many billions of euro’s.

Through a simple set of lifestyle changes (eat well, drink well, move), a large proportion of these diseases could be prevented. For example, by 150 minutes of physical activity per week, each citizen can contribute to a healthier Europe. “Abdominal obesity must be on top of Europe’s agenda”, said Jean-Claude Coubard, Chairman of EHLA. “People sitting still risk their health and impose enormous costs to society. The same goes for EU decision-makers: sitting still is not an option. We call on the EU, national governments and the people to start moving; this way, we can save money and lives”.

www-ehla.europe.eu // www.ehla-france.fr // www.myhealthywaist.org

***About EHLA:**

*The European Healthy Lifestyle Alliance (EHLA) – an initiative of the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk (ICCR) – is a non-profit association based in Brussels. EHLA is scientifically based, multidisciplinary and independent. EHLA provides EU decision-makers with scientific evidence on the impact of obesity, related health risks and on the need for lifestyle changes. EHLA wants to formulate recommendations and propose actions on what the EU and its citizens can do, together with other stakeholders, to halt abdominal obesity.

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