

Press release

Solutions to Europe's growing oral health problems presented by Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe

Brussels, 13th October 2015 – Today the Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe held its Second European Oral Health Summit, during which it discussed ways on how to reduce the economic and social burden of poor oral health in Europe, and the impact of oral diseases on quality of life. The Platform also published a collection of best practices in oral health promotion and prevention.

The [best practices collection](#) outlines the scale of the oral health problem in Europe:

- Oral diseases remain a major public health problem both in Europe and worldwide and share common risk factors with many chronic diseases.
- Oral diseases have considerable negative impacts on the quality of life of populations.
- A recent study published on the global economic impact of dental diseases estimates annual direct costs in Europe at 72.96 billion EUR and indirect costs such as loss of productivity at 37.56 billion EUR

The collection contains 28 examples of oral health prevention and promotion programmes from across Europe which the Platform sees as possible solutions for reducing the burden of oral diseases and oral health inequalities both within and between Member States.

Opening the discussions, MEP Karin Kadenbach (S&D – Austria) referred to the economic burden of oral diseases in Europe and the cost effectiveness of prevention: *“the Platform’s report estimates direct costs of treating oral diseases at over 73 billion EUR in 2010, plus loss of productivity estimated at over 37 billion EUR annually. Implementing programmes to solve the problem of oral health does not have to cost huge amounts. In fact, the cost effective nature of preventive programmes is something we should seek to further highlight in order to urge the European Commission and Member States’ governments to redirect their funding towards health promotion and prevention.”*

Presenting the Platform’s best practices collection, Dr Paula Vassallo, Chair of the Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe stressed that *“the examples demonstrated in this report highlight that solutions to Europe’s oral health problems do exist. The European Commission and Member States should establish a formal mechanism such as a Joint Action on Oral Health to ensure the proper evaluation and roll-out of these programmes across the European Union, for the benefit of the oral health of all citizens.”*

In conclusion, MEP Andrey Kovatchev (EPP – Bulgaria) noted that *“oral diseases share common risk factors with many chronic diseases. If rolled out across Member States, these preventive programmes would therefore not only help address the problem of oral diseases, but also the burden of other chronic diseases. This is crucial to the sustainability of our health care systems.”*

ABOUT THE BETTER ORAL HEALTH EUROPEAN PLATFORM

The Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe is a joint initiative of the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE), the Council of European Chief Dental Officers (CECDOs), the European Association of Dental Public Health (EADPH), the European Dental Health Foundation (EDHF).

The Platform was created to respond to the call to action handed over by Members of the European Parliament to then Health Commissioner John Dalli in 2010. The Platform promotes a common European approach towards education, prevention and access to better oral health in Europe. The activities of the Platform are supported by the Wrigley Oral Healthcare Program and GlaxoSmithKline.

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