



Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

We are contacting you on behalf of the [Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe](#), a joint initiative of the Council of European Chief Dental Officers, the European Association of Dental Public Health, the Pan-European Region of the International Association for Dental Research, the Association for Dental Education in Europe, the Oral Health Foundation and associate members. The Platform's goal is to create a common European approach towards improved oral health outcomes through public health, research, education, health promotion, and increased access to care.

Oral diseases and conditions are the most common NCDs and share the same risk factors as other NCDs, resulting in negative impacts on citizens' general health and on EU economies in long-term. Moreover, they are socially patterned and disproportionately affect the more disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in our societies. Therefore, the Platform is fully committed towards the implementation of integrated health promotion actions and preventive strategies to improve the oral and general health of European populations and reduce health inequalities.

In February 2021, the Platform warmly welcomed the European Commission's Beating Cancer Plan. We presented the attached policy position on the Plan, which is aligned with our core goal to create a more coordinated and targeted approach towards cancer prevention at EU level through addressing its primary risk factors. The Platform has set out a number of recommendations to enhance cancer prevention and early cancer detection as well as reducing health inequalities. There are huge disparities in rates of oral cancer across Europe and, due to late detection, survival rates have not improved in the last 30 years.

The Platform's work to identify readily available oral health indicators that are now being included in the OECD Health at a Glance Reports is a first step in addressing the excessive burden of oral diseases and conditions and putting oral health on the European health policy agenda. We remain committed to continue this effort also for future versions of the reports.

Considerable inequalities persist within the EU with regards to both oral health and access to oral care services. This situation must be addressed at EU level, as oral health is one of the first lines of defense when addressing key common risk factors for NCDs. The recent WHO Global Oral Health Strategy calls for oral care to be part of the Universal Health Coverage, in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 3. We see this as a major opportunity and suggest a stronger priority for oral health in the European health agenda so that all EU citizens have access to affordable and quality oral health care.

With increasing recognition of the links between poor oral health and poor general health, oral health is vital to the general health of EU citizens. In our [Manifesto](#), we call for the integration of oral health as part of general health and for the promotion of cross-sectoral cooperation. We therefore hope to be able to work closely with the European Commission to propose an



Oral Health Action Plan for Europe to support the implementation of the WHO's upcoming Global Strategy on Oral Health.

At this crucial and pioneering moment paving the way to a European Health Union through EU4Health, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how oral health could be leveraged into the EU public health agenda. By acting as the regional European coalition on oral health through coordination of our member organisations, we can effectively and efficiently support the European Commission and European Member States in this effort.

We would be honored to arrange a meeting with yourself and your team in the coming weeks to move this discussion forward.

Kind regards,

Prof Georgios Tsakos,

Chair of the Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe