

Written statement from IDF Europe to provisional agenda item 9: A strategy on harnessing innovation for public health in the WHO European Region 2025–2030

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The International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF Europe), representing the voice of people living with diabetes (PwD) and healthcare professionals across Europe, welcomes and supports the *strategy on harnessing innovation for public health in the WHO European Region 2025-2030*.

Diabetes is a complex, chronic condition affecting over 65 million people in the European Region.¹ Only half of PwD meet their glucose targets, highlighting the complexity and difficulty of managing diabetes well. Innovations have already revolutionised diabetes management. However, all too often, evidence-based innovative solutions, be they technological, clinical or organisational, are slow to be implemented or scaled, leading to inequitable access to medicines, technologies and care.

Despite advances in medicines and medical technologies to help with the management of diabetes, our siloed approaches to care and our knowledge of the causes and trajectories of the disease remain insufficient to adequately prevent, manage and ultimately cure the disease. The strategy for harnessing innovation rightly outlines the importance of prioritising innovations that will lead to sustainable improvements in public health outcomes and prioritising unmet needs. Many unmet needs exist within the diabetes community that require increased research, innovation and subsequent implementation at scale, including:

- **Prevention:** strategies to delay or prevent both type 1 (T1D) and type 2 diabetes (T2D), beyond behavioural factors, remain limited. Lifestyle modifications are difficult to sustain, and further research into immunological and pharmacological prevention is needed.
- **Management:** advances in therapies and technologies have improved outcomes but most PwD still do not reach treatment targets and complications remain common. Innovative treatment routes, organ-protective agents and integrated care delivery across diabetes/cardiovascular disease/chronic kidney disease and obesity require further research and implementation.
- **Cure and remission:** a cure for all forms of diabetes remains the ultimate unmet need. For T1D, this would mean restoring natural insulin production. For T2D, addressing insulin resistance is key. Research into long-term and accessible remission strategies for T2D must also be accelerated.

¹ [Diabetes in Europe | IDF Diabetes Atlas](#)

To make advances on addressing these unmet needs, it is crucial that Member States (MS) and WHO Europe create the right condition for innovation to thrive and for best practices to be shared within and between countries. Building on the strategy's proposed actions, progress will depend on:

- **Innovation-friendly policies and governance frameworks:** MS should develop cohesive, cross-sectoral national policies that prioritise needs-driven health innovations, including those addressing the unmet needs of PwD. This includes, for example, incentivising public and private investment in innovation and implementing innovation-friendly policies that support equitable access to effective technologies. While the drive to accelerate innovation is welcome, it must be balanced with a continued focus on safety, efficacy and equity.
- **Co-creation and meaningful engagement:** IDF Europe supports the strategy's recommendations to co-create innovations through regional and national platforms bringing together public health authorities, academia, industry stakeholders and civil society. The meaningful involvement of people with lived experience is essential to ensure that innovations are designed, implemented and evaluated in line with real-world needs.
- **Investment in capacity and literacy:** Strengthening national and individual capacities for innovation is key to effective adoption and scale-up. This includes investing in health infrastructure and workforce development to ready the healthcare sector for new innovations and digital and health literacy among populations to ensure that innovations are understandable and usable by the populations they aim to serve.

IDF Europe stands ready to work with WHO Europe, Member States and partners to ensure that innovation translates into meaningful, equitable health outcomes for all people living with diabetes and other NCDs.