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Foreword

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), also known as chronic diseases, are diseases that are not transmissible from one person to another, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases. NCDs are the result of **unhealthy lifestyles**, e.g. tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and use of alcohol, leading to metabolic and physiological changes. In European countries, NCDs are responsible for an enormous part of the burden that public health systems in the Member States are facing. The increasing rates of deaths related to NCDs in Europe are concerning, but although running rampant, the complex health issues caused by NCDs can be tackled, if we improve prevention measures and promote health.

balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats is essential for our overall health, and reduces the risk of chronic illnesses.

The **Preventia project** aims to decrease the spreading of NCDs across the EU, while reducing health inequalities and fostering cooperation and exchanges between the EU Member States.



Stay tuned for news about the consortium and developments from the project

SAFE, LCI, EEKE, CEIP, Promote Ukraine, U.DI.CON, ADOC

Over the past two years, we have worked closely with schools, migration centres, NGOs, and medical institutions to deliver targeted programmes that advance health equity and promote disease prevention across Europe.

Key events in pilot countries include:

Empowering schools in underserved communities

We developed and delivered tailored educational materials and conducted over 20 training sessions across Croatia, Greece, Italy, and Lithuania, reaching approximately 660 children and adolescents.

Fostering healthy lifestyles through community engagement

Our community-based culinary workshops brought together migrants in Greece, Italy, Lithuania, and Croatia, promoting healthy eating habits while encouraging cultural exchange. In total, 107 participants from migration centres took part.

Strengthening medical collaboration across borders

A twinning programme at Galeazzi–Sant’Ambrogio Hospital in Milan connected healthcare professionals from Belgium, Croatia, and Lithuania, supporting knowledge exchange and capacity building.

around prevention and healthy living. In Rome, a citizen event offered children training sessions, physical activities, and healthy snacks, while adults benefited from free medical consultations and yoga classes. In Bilje (Croatia), an information stand was set up where citizens could test the BiteWatch app, receive advice from a nutritionist, and access promotional materials.

NCD prevention workshops with key actors

Workshops with NGOs and Ukrainian health professionals were organised in partner countries to train key actors on NCD prevention, with a focus on emergency situations.

Additionally, we conducted an assessment of NCD policies in partner countries. The findings informed a [policy brief](#) that provides a comprehensive set of recommendations to support more effective public health policymaking.

Furthermore, for consumer empowerment, SAFE launched BiteWatch®, a free mobile phone application to make informed food choices. By scanning food products, users access nutritional insights and identify potentially harmful ingredients.

The app can be downloaded at the following links:

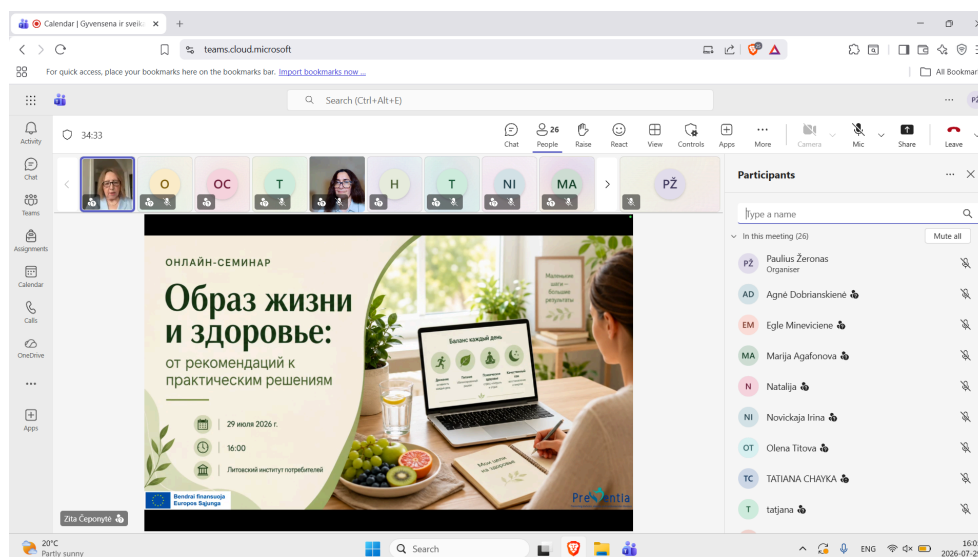
[iOS](#)

[Android](#)

The project final event will take place on 18 November in Brussels. Please register through the following link: [Registration form SAFE's Annual Conference 2026](#)

Find out more about our activities on our [project's webpage](#).

Workshop with Ukrainian health professionals in Lithuania



On 29 July 2026, LCI organised the online workshop 'Lifestyle and Health: From Recommendations to Practical Solutions'. A total of 33 people joined the workshop: 29 participants, three members of the workshop team and one representative of Visaginas Municipality working with foreign residents. The participants included 18 healthcare and public-health professionals from Ukraine, mainly from regional disease control and prevention centres and medical or pharmaceutical education institutions, and 11 Ukrainian professionals living in Lithuania, including physicians and professionals working in nursing, pharmacy, massage and social care.

Presenters highlighted the importance of evidence-based, clear and practical health recommendations and the need to distinguish reliable information from misleading advice, and presented evidence-based approaches to preventing NCDs, focusing on nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress management and behaviour change.

cooperation between healthcare and public-health institutions, and the adaptation of interventions to a person's health, abilities, motivation and social circumstances. Particular attention was given to gradual, realistic and achievable changes.

A separate part of the workshop focused on adapting NCD prevention interventions during emergencies and wartime. It addressed how continuity of care and preventive support can be maintained when healthcare and social services are disrupted and resources are limited. It was emphasised that interventions in crisis situations must be simple, flexible and adapted to available resources and people's immediate needs.



Uncover the most relevant news about non-communicable diseases, nutrition and health

Popular Sugar Substitute Linked to Higher Risk of Heart Attack and Stroke, *Newsweek*, 27 August 2026

The article discusses research linking high blood levels of xylitol, a common sugar substitute, with greater long-term risks of major cardiovascular events including heart attack and stroke.

People who consume sugar-sweetened beverages on a daily basis have higher risk of stomach cancer, *Medical Xpress*, 17 August 2026

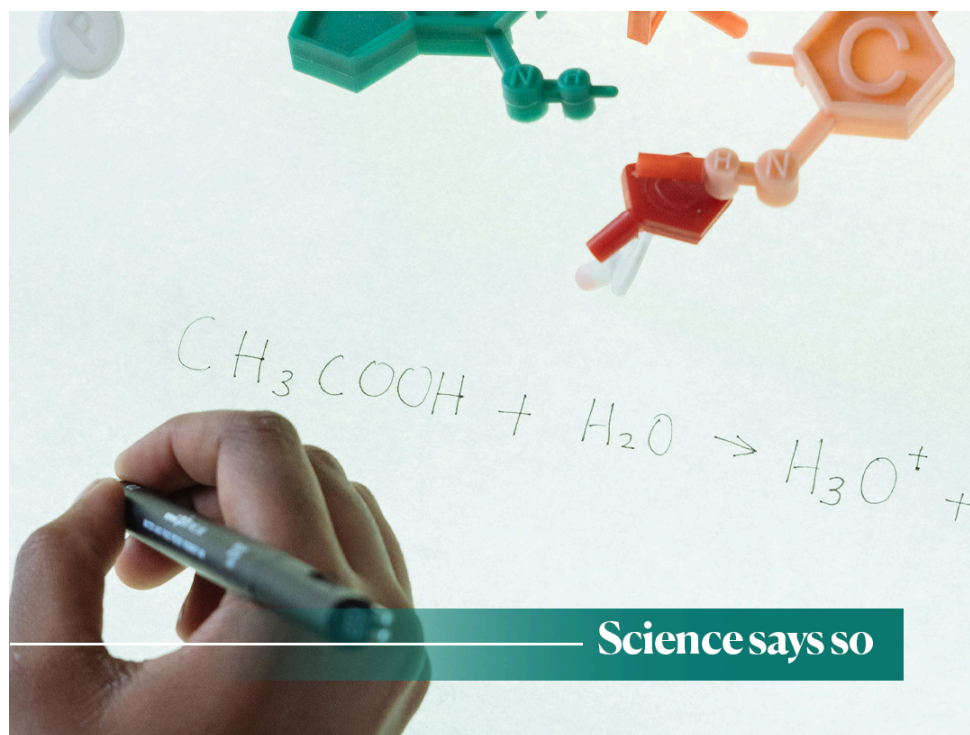
Researchers found that people consuming at least one sugar-sweetened beverage daily had a significantly higher risk of gastric (stomach) cancer than those rarely consuming such drinks.

Building a Plan for Healthy Eating, *Harvard Health*, 11 August 2026

The article provides practical guidance for healthy eating using the Harvard Healthy Eating Plate model. It also offers meal planning and grocery shopping strategies to support healthier diets.

'If all else fails, sue': how ultra-processed food firms are using the courts to obstruct health rules, *The Guardian*, 22 July 2026

lawsuits targeted measures such as front-of-pack warnings, marketing restrictions and junk-food taxes.



Sciencesays so

Uncover the most relevant scientific studies about non-communicable diseases, nutrition and health

Scientists discover how fructose may help drive obesity. *Medical Xpress*, 2 September 2026

Researchers from the University of California found that fructose may contribute to obesity not only through calorie intake but also by altering the gut microbiome and intestinal fat absorption mechanisms.

Effects of obesity on brain health and cognition. *Nature Reviews Neurology*, 1 September 2026

This review examines how obesity affects the brain and highlights evidence linking obesity with cognitive impairment and dementia.

Plant diversity: Does it really matter for health? *EurekAlert!*, 27 August 2026

Analysis of 1,131 participants found that consuming a wider variety of plant foods was associated with lower BMI, higher HDL cholesterol, better gut microbiome scores, higher fibre intake and better overall diet quality.

High body mass index within the normal weight range and risk of type 2 diabetes and hypertension in US and Europe: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Obesity*, 12 August 2026

This systematic review and meta-analysis examined whether BMI values at the upper end of the "normal" range are associated with higher risks of type 2 diabetes and hypertension.



EU Regulatory Updates

Find out the latest positions, progresses and regulatory developments on health, nutrition and NCDs prevention

European Parliament backs EU cardiovascular health strategy, European Parliament, 16 September 2026

The European Parliament has adopted MEP Romana Jerković's report on an EU cardiovascular diseases strategy, supporting stronger action to prevent and address cardiovascular disease across Europe. The report responds to the European Commission's Safe Hearts Plan and calls for a coordinated European approach to tackling one of the EU's leading causes of death.

State of the Union 2026, European Public Health Association, 16 September 2026

In her 2026 State of the Union address, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen outlined the EU's priorities for the year ahead, focusing on Europe's resilience, competitiveness, security and social well-being. EPHA's analysis of the 2026 SOTEU highlights the need to put health and a strong civil society at the heart of Europe's resilience agenda. It calls for health to remain a core priority across EU policies and for civil society to have a meaningful role in shaping Europe's response to current and future challenges.

Investing in Health: Securing EU funding for health promotion and NCD prevention in the next Multiannual Financial Framework, JA PreventNCD, 17 June 2026

Calls for stronger EU investment in health promotion and NCD prevention in the next long-term EU budget.

Promoting physical activity for health equity in Europe, EuroHealthNet, 15 June 2026

Publication highlighting policy options to increase physical activity while reducing health inequalities across Europe.

European Pillar of Social Rights Flashcard Tool, EuroHealthNet

Interactive resource helping stakeholders connect health, social equity and wellbeing objectives with the European Pillar of Social Rights.



Upcoming events on NCDs, prevention, and healthy nutrition

Health for a stronger European Union High time for action!, organised by European Health Forum Gastein, 29 September - 2 October 2026, Bad Hofgastein, Austria and online

EU Screening Week 2026, organised by the European Commission, 29 September - 4 October 2026, Europe

Are ultra-processed foods the next addiction? Lessons from tobacco for Europe's regulatory response, organised by EuroHealthNet, 6 October, Brussels, Belgium

Urban and global synergies: shaping the future of public health with climate resilience, equity and innovation, organised by the European Public Health Association, 10-13 November 2026, Bilbao, Spain

SAFE's Annual Conference, organised by Safe Food Advocacy Europe, 18 November 2026, Brussels, Belgium

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