

## “Healthy Lifestyle for Healthy Kidneys”

*World Kidney Day 2017*

**9 March 2017, Brussels**

Obesity is a serious public health problem, as it significantly increases the risk of many chronic diseases -- notably, individuals affected by obesity have an 83% increased risk of Chronic Kidney Disease, compared to individuals with a healthy weight. For society as a whole, obesity has substantial direct and indirect costs that put a considerable strain on healthcare and social resources. **Today, in celebration World Kidney Day, the European Kidney Health Alliance is calling for a fundamental shift in policy and for much greater attention to risk factors for CKD, including obesity.**

Weight problems and obesity are increasing at an alarmingly rapid rate in most EU Member States. In 2014, more than half of adults aged 18 or over (51.6%) were over-weight (in these, 35.7% were pre-obese and 15.9% obese). In other words, nearly 1 in every 6 persons aged 18 or over in the EU was obese in 2014. Obesity can lead to CKD both indirectly by increasing type 2 diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, and also by causing direct kidney damage by increasing the workload of the kidneys. In Europe it is estimated that 1 in 10 people suffer from reduced kidney function. **There is an urgent need for improved public awareness, prevention strategies, and health education to deal with this growing and costly problem.**

“Studies have shown that even a relatively minor investment in prevention would result in considerable health gains and reduced future healthcare costs. Population-wide actions to lower the consumption of fat, salt and sugar, and to increase daily physical activity are highly cost-effective actions to tackle over-weight and obesity, and the related comorbidities including increased risk of CKD,” according to EKHA Chairman Professor Emeritus Raymond Vanholder.

Investing in prevention should be a main focus. Currently, 97% of healthcare expenditure in Europe is spent on treatment and only 3% on prevention. **Today on World Kidney Day, EKHA joins the global kidney community in promoting this year’s WKD theme “Healthy lifestyle for healthy kidneys”.** EKHA encourages a preventive approach by the general public, healthcare professionals and health authorities. EKHA further urges governments to invest in population-wide actions that stimulate healthy lifestyles and improve health literacy, especially targeting youth, where the greatest impact over the long term can be made.

[EKHA fully endorses World Kidney Day](#) and supports the [Joint Statement on kidney disease and obesity](#) by the World Kidney Day and the World Obesity Federation.

### **ABOUT:**

The **European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA)** is an Alliance of not-for-profit organisations representing all European stakeholders in kidney health issues including patients, nephrologists, researchers and health care workers in Europe. Please see [www.ekha.eu](http://www.ekha.eu)



**World Kidney Day** is a unique opportunity to raise awareness in the public and at the highest political level for the prioritisation of prevention of Chronic Kidney Disease in public health programmes, for the benefit of the growing number of people suffering, but also for our health systems and society in general. Please see [www.worldkidneyday.org](http://www.worldkidneyday.org)

The **MEP Group for Kidney Health** works in collaboration with the European Kidney Health Alliance as a forum for important issues surrounding kidney health to be discussed at EU level. It brings together experts from the kidney community (physicians, patients, researchers, health economists, nurses and allied professionals) and European policymakers to discuss key topics and activities related to kidney health. In this way, MEPs receive valuable information relevant to their current work and are better able to hold the European Commission to account as it drafts new proposals that impinge on kidney health. The MEP Group meets once to twice yearly for concise and focused meetings. The group is chaired by Karin Kadenbach, MEP. Please see <http://ekha.eu/mep-group/>

**CONTACT:**



For further information about **EKHA** or the **MEP Group for Kidney Health** please see [www.ekha.eu](http://www.ekha.eu) or contact the **EKHA Secretariat**: [info@ekha.eu](mailto:info@ekha.eu) or +32 2 213 1398