EUROPE’S UNEQUAL BURDEN OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES –
THE ACTUAL FACTS

Brussels, 28 February 2017: The publication of the new report on Cardiovascular Disease Statistics 2017 will be the basis of a debate today in the European Parliament in Brussels.

The debate is organised by the Members of the European Parliament (MEP) Heart Group, with the support of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and of the European Heart Network (EHN).

In a first presentation, the European Cardiovascular Disease Statistics 2017 report will be presented. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is still the number one cause of death in Europe but the fall in death rates from heart disease and stroke over recent decades shows a sustainable trend.

“However, with obesity levels rising and diabetes increasing in Europe (in some countries by more than 50%) it is unlikely that the burden of cardiovascular disease, both in terms of human suffering and economic costs, will decrease” says Mairead McGuinness co-chair of the MEP Heart Group. “Our focus must be on prevention of heart health problems and identifying those at risk from heart disease early on. If we could achieve this focus on prevention then there would be reduced suffering for patients and reduced costs for member states. This report should reinforce our efforts in this direction”, she added.

A second presentation will show the increasing cost of cardiovascular diseases on our societies. Whereas less people die from cardiovascular disease, more and more people live with the disease. “The total cost of €210 billion puts a heavy burden on the economy of the EU; if we want to be able to keep up the high living standard, the European Union has to put policies in place which reduce social and economic inequalities between different regions and countries in the EU and help people with chronic diseases to best manage their conditions” states Karin Kadenbach, co-chair of the MEP Heart Group.

The third presentation will focus on the quality of cardiovascular prevention activities around Europe. The European Association for Preventive Cardiology (EAPC) has joined hands with a network of national prevention coordinators in all European states, both within and outside the EU. On its dedicated website “Prevention in your Country” the coordinators have published national prevention reports. This site provides a unique overview of the state of prevention around Europe not only for health workers but even for politicians. Joep Perk, EAPC coordinator of the website, will present this key source of information at the MEP Heart Group meeting.

ENDS
Notes to Editor

About Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD)
CVD is the main cause of death in the EU accounting for over 1.8 million deaths each year. In 2015, almost 49 million people were living with CVD in the EU. These diseases are estimated to cost the EU economy almost €210 billion per year.

About the MEP Heart Group
The main objective of the MEP Heart Group is to promote measures that will help reduce the burden of CVD in the European Union and to raise awareness of the disease among target audiences through a series of dedicated activities. The MEP Heart Group is led by two Co-Chairs, Ms Mairead McGuinness (EPP, IE) and Ms Karin Kadenbach (S&D, AT). The European Society of Cardiology and the European Heart Network provide support to the MEP Heart Group by running its Secretariat.

www.mepheartgroup.eu

About the European Society of Cardiology
The European Society of Cardiology brings together health care professionals from more than 120 countries, working to advance cardiovascular medicine and help people lead longer, healthier lives.

www.escardio.org

About the European Heart Network
The European Heart Network (EHN) is a Brussels-based alliance of heart foundations and like-minded non-governmental organisations throughout Europe. EHN has member organisations in 25 countries. EHN plays a leading role in the prevention and reduction of cardiovascular diseases, in particular heart disease and stroke, through advocacy, networking, capacity building and patient support, so that they are no longer a major cause of premature death and disability throughout Europe.

www.ehnheart.org