

EN
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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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The World Health Organization is responsible for the international classification of diseases¹.

The Healthier Together – EU non-communicable diseases (NCDs) initiative² was launched in 2022 to support Member States in reducing the burden of NCDs, including conditions such as myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). The Commission supports the collection and transfer of best and promising practices across the EU via the EU Best Practice Portal and with funding from the EU4Health programme. The priorities and actions to be taken forward under the Healthier Together initiative are agreed by the Member States in the Expert Group on Public Health (PHEG), the key forum for exchange with national authorities.

The Commission recognises the need for solutions to efficiently tackle ME/CFS. Call topics³ were recently opened under the Horizon Europe Programme⁴ that offered researchers in the ME/CFS area an opportunity to apply for research funding. EU-funded projects studying long COVID⁵ also stand to benefit the field. Horizon Europe will continue to offer opportunities for research funding, as call topics are broad enough to accommodate for more targeted ME/CFS research.

The Commission remains committed to promoting collaboration among Member States on tackling existing and emerging public health challenges.

¹ <https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/classification-of-diseases>

² https://health.ec.europa.eu/non-communicable-diseases/healthier-together-eu-non-communicable-diseases-initiative_en

³ These topics included: ‘Tackling high burden for patients, under-researched medical conditions’ - <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-hlth-2024-disease-03-14-two-stage> and ‘Relationship between infections and non-communicable diseases’ - <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-hlth-2023-disease-03-07>

⁴ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

⁵ Projects include Long COVID - <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101057553> and ORCHESTRA - <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101016167>. The Long COVID project will also study the response of patients with ME/CFS to certain therapies. The ORCHESTRA project has led to a better understanding of the determinants and clinical presentations of Long COVID syndrome, as well as the predictors of long-term fatigue.