

Europaminister
Asiatisk Plads 2
1448 København K
Att.: Marie Bjerre

July 4th, 2025

Dear Marie Bjerre,

On behalf of the Danish Kidney Association and our colleagues in the European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA), the Danish Society of Nephrologists, the Danish Society for Renal Nurses and CompCure, I am reaching out in light of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

In May 2025, at the 78th World Health Assembly, Member States, including Denmark, adopted a resolution to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by promoting kidney health and strengthening the prevention and control of kidney disease. Kidney disease is therefore now acknowledged as a global health priority by the World Health Organization (WHO). Accordingly, we would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you and discuss the substantial burden of kidney disease in Europe, as a focus on kidney health and kidney care could contribute to the Danish EU Presidency and Danish national policy goals that benefit patients, including people with kidney disease.

Regarding the goals that we jointly share as outlined in Denmark's EU Presidency programme, we wish to highlight how the integration of kidney health would contribute to their achievement.

1. Crisis preparedness and resilience, and the strategic importance of an integrated approach to all threats and risks

People with kidney disease, particularly those with kidney failure in need of dialysis, are endangered in crises, by their very frequent need for high-technology care, and significant quantities of water, electricity and consumables, all of which are lacking in catastrophes. Nevertheless, the needs of people with kidney diseases are often forgotten in emergency plans. It is therefore important to ensure that kidney care is included in **crisis preparedness and resilience** across the EU, advocating for policies that address the patient needs during times of war, natural disasters, or health system shocks. We note the strategic importance of an integrated approach to all threats and risks in the Danish EU Presidency programme. Denmark hosted the Global high-level technical meeting on non-communicable diseases in humanitarian settings, co-hosted by the WHO and UNHCR, in Copenhagen in February 2024, where dialysis was included as an important priority in crisis management for the first time, highlighting the growing recognition that the needs of these patients no longer can be overlooked.

2. The adoption of the WHA Resolution to promote NCDs through prevention and control of kidney disease: a European Framework on NCDs

This resolution, which includes prevention, screening and early treatment of chronic kidney disease (CKD), is key to reducing the NCD burden. CKD is still underrecognized in European health policies, despite its significant and growing impact. This lack of visibility results in limited awareness, inadequate preventive measures, delayed diagnoses, insufficient research funding, and poor patient outcomes. CKD affects

approximately 100 million Europeans, with an additional 300 million at risk, creating a substantial strain on EU health systems. The annual healthcare costs for CKD in Europe are estimated at €140 billion. Several new therapeutic options specifically targeting CKD have emerged which can improve health cost-effectively, and thereby reduce future costs of treating kidney failure if they are appropriately adopted into clinical care. We therefore strongly advocate, now more than ever, for the adoption of a **European Framework on NCDs** that must include a chronic kidney disease (CKD) Prevention Initiative, and support the systematic sharing of best practices across EU member states to enhance screening and care for kidney disease. The increasing prevalence of CKD risk factors, coupled with demographic changes across EU Member States, will continue to exacerbate the burden and cost of CKD. CKD is expected to become the fifth leading cause of death globally by 2050. **Council conclusions** would serve as a first step towards this EU NCD framework's future adoption.

3. Innovation

People suffering from kidney failure and their non-professional caregivers often experience a diminished quality of life due to outdated and inadequate treatments. Despite the new overarching treatments for CKD, more research is urgently required to address specific diseases which affect the kidneys, including rare diseases, and there is a strong need for further **medical and technologic therapeutic innovation** especially in dialysis and transplantation. **Progress is impeded by insufficient funding of kidney research and development.** In 2023, a scoping study from the European Commission highlighted that CKD receives disproportionately low funding relative to its overall burden¹. In the context of upcoming discussions around the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), there is a strong need for ambitious funding in kidney research and innovation to develop new tools that can reduce further the progression of kidney diseases and improve outcomes in those still requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant.

4. Staff shortages

The Danish EU Presidency is actively addressing both domestic **staff shortages** and the ethical dimensions of international recruitment. This is a particularly pressing issue in nephrology, where the high staffing demands of in-centre haemodialysis make workforce shortages especially acute.

Given these priorities we share, we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to see how EKHA could support the Danish Presidency in the successful delivery of its EU Presidency programme. Thank you in advance for your consideration, and we look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Michael Buksti

Michael Buksti, Maging Director, Danish Kidney Association (Nyreforeningen). [Nyreforeningen is a patient organization dedicated to improve living conditions for people living with a chronic kidney disease and their relatives.](#)

¹ European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Tuyl, L. v., Zinger, N., Heide, I. v. d., Kroneman, M. et al., *Scoping study on evidence to tackle high-burden under-researched medical conditions – Discussion paper*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/311040>

Valerie A. Luyckx, University Children's Hospital, Zurich, Switzerland, President EKHA. [\[EKHA is dedicated to advocating for improved kidney health across Europe. It represents > 40 organizations in 25 countries, including Denmark\]](#).

Henrik Birn, (MD, DMSc, Professor, Consultant nephrologist, Aarhus University Hospital), Chairman, Danish Society of Nephrology [\[The Danish Society of Nephrology is the professional body for the Danish renal physician community. With > 300 members, it undertaking scientific, educational and guideline activities to improve kidney care\]](#).

Karina Bruun, MPH, Chief Nurse, Nephrology Department, Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen, President, The Danish Society for Renal Nurses [\[The Danish Society for Renal Nurses of dedicated to advancing nephrology nursing through education, collaboration, and professional development\]](#)

Marianne Silkjaer Nielsen, President, CompCure [\[CompCure is a globally operating non-profit association registered in Denmark and dedicated to improving outcomes in complement-mediated kidney diseases\]](#).