

Joint Letter: Call for European action on Blood Health

Brussels, 17th September, 2026

Dear Chair MEP Jarubas,

Dear Coordinators of the Committee on Public Health (SANT),

We, the undersigned organisations, representing patients, healthcare professionals, and public health stakeholders across Europe, are writing to call on the European Parliament's Committee on Public Health (SANT) to place **blood health** firmly on the policy agenda.

Specifically, we are writing to urge the SANT Committee to:

1. Hold a dedicated **public hearing on blood health**, and
2. Initiate and adopt a **European Parliament Resolution on improving blood health in Europe**.

These actions are necessary to ensure that blood health is recognised, prioritised, and addressed at EU level.

Blood health: a major but neglected public health challenge

Blood health is fundamental to human health and should be recognised as a cornerstone of EU health policy. As a **liquid organ**, blood is essential to the functioning of every organ and system in the body. Yet, despite its importance, blood health remains under-recognised and under-prioritised in European policy discussions.

Poor blood health, mostly caused by anaemia and iron deficiency, affects **more than 28 million people in Europe and over 2 billion people globally**. These staggering figures show that poor blood health is a major public health concern that significantly reduces quality of life, increases morbidity and mortality, and places a substantial burden on healthcare systems. This is despite the fact that the causes of poor blood health are often preventable and treatable.

Blood health is also directly linked to the European Union's major health priorities. It is both a **driver and a consequence of chronic diseases**, including cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic kidney disease, inflammatory bowel disease, and conditions affecting women and children. For example:

- **Anaemia is a significant cardiovascular risk amplifier**, present in up to 50% of heart failure patients and 30% of people with diabetes.
- Poor blood health is **also common in patients with chronic kidney disease** due to impaired hormone production and reduced red blood cell formation. As the damage to the kidneys increases, so does the prevalence of anaemia.
- Anaemia is also strongly linked to inflammatory bowel disease, affecting around one in four patients, due to long-term gut inflammation interfering with blood and iron balance.
- **Between 30% and 90% of cancer patients experience anaemia**, especially as some cancers cause inflammation that decreases red blood cell production, which is associated with poorer survival rates.
- **Between 30% and 50% of patients are anaemic prior to major surgery**. When operated in this condition, these patients require more blood transfusions and suffer from adverse outcomes, including mortality, postoperative infections and acute kidney failure. As a consequence, their hospital stay is prolonged and treatment costs increase.
- **Women of reproductive age are disproportionately affected** due to menstruation and pregnancy-related iron demands, with consequences for both maternal and child health.
- In children, **iron deficiency anaemia impairs cognitive and physical development**, with lifelong consequences for motor skills, attention, and learning.

A clear gap in EU health policy the European Parliament must address

Despite its cross-cutting relevance, blood health remains largely absent from EU policy frameworks.

Addressing poor blood health offers a clear opportunity to:

- Improve patient outcomes across multiple disease areas,
- Reduce health inequalities, particularly among vulnerable populations, and
- Strengthen healthcare system sustainability by implementing effective approaches to optimise blood health, such as patient blood management (PBM).

In short, improving blood health is essential to achieve a healthier, more resilient Europe.

The European Parliament has a key role to play. By convening a public hearing and advancing a Resolution on blood health, the SANT Committee can bring long-overdue political attention to this issue and catalyse coordinated action across Member States.

We stand ready to support the Committee in advancing this important agenda and would welcome the opportunity to contribute to future discussions.

Yours sincerely,ⁱ



Alliance Rouge



Association for hematological research on the quality of life (QOL-ONE Association)



Blood and Beyond



Bulgarian Association of Patients with Kidney Diseases and Friends (APBS)



European Heart Network (EHN)



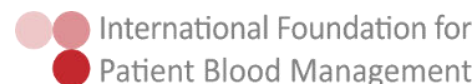
Global Alliance for Patient Access (GaPA)



Haematology Nurses & Healthcare Professionals Group (HNHCP)



Hellenic Cancer Society



International Foundation for Patient Blood Management (IFPBM)



Italian Kidney Foundation (FIR)



Mended Hearts Europe



Network for the Advancement of Patient Blood Management, Haemostasis and Thrombosis (NATA)



Czech Association of Patients with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (Pacienti IBD)



Spanish Federation of Kidney Patients (ALCER)



Thalassemia International Federation (TIF)



World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA)

ⁱ The views and recommendations expressed are those of the endorsing organisations. Industry played no role in the conception, drafting, or decision to disseminate this letter.