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# Transforming EU Continenence Health: A Manifesto for Policy Reform



**The EU Continenence Health Summit 2023 took place in Brussels on November 8, 2023.**

Policies and laws in Europe and EU Member States often neglect continence care, causing it to become a major health issue worsened by an aging society. Insufficient treatments are currently being used in Europe to prevent, treat, and cure incontinence issues, leading to significant healthcare costs, lost productivity, and reduced quality of life.

The signatories of the "Transforming EU Continenence Health:

A Manifesto for Policy Reform" urge policymakers to prioritize patient-centered continence care in both European and national settings.

They call on European and national policymakers to:

1. Develop a comprehensive EU continence health strategy
2. Give individuals full and equitable access to continence health solutions
3. Guarantee access to toileting facilities in public and private spaces
4. Improve the number and accessibility of trained healthcare providers
5. Find and fund sustainable continence care solutions for health systems
6. Support informal caregivers
7. Understand the interconnections of continence and related health domains
8. Improve funding for continence health research
9. Run public awareness campaigns
10. Encourage public-private partnerships to improve continence health





# UI High in the EU Radar

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## Economic Burden

In 2023, the total economic burden of Urinary Incontinence in Europe is estimated at nearly €70 billion.



If no action is taken, the total economic burden of UI in Europe is will increase with 25%.

Urge to Act

**1/2 Diabetes**  
**2/3 Cancer**

increases by 16%

Informal support provided by caregivers

**€86.7 billion in 2030**  
**to €100.2 billion**  
with caregiver costs

**55–60**  
**million**  
**Europeans**



**4X**

€55.7 billion for females and  
€13.5 billion for males

## Quality of Life *Patients and caregivers*

UI, can significantly reduce the QOL for individuals

Incontinence pads and productivity losses were 2/3 of the costs associated with UI in the UK\*



\*These proportions are expected to be similar across other European countries.

Urge to Act

Various aspects of a person's life: Physical – Emotional - social well-being

Impact on

- ✓ work productivity
- ✓ sexuality
- ✓ emotional well-being

The impact of UI on quality of life can be seen in terms of:

- ✓ limitations in daily activities embarrassment
- ✓ social isolation
- ✓ decreased self-esteem
- ✓ Negative effects on mental health.

## Ecological

**39 billion**  
**units**  
**globally in**  
**2021**

€83.4 billion for recycling and  
€83.3 billion for incineration in  
2023.

Sales in 2010 -2021  
increased **57%**  
Over the next 5 years  
(CAGR) : 2.5%

Carbon emissions

100%  
incontinence  
waste recycling

Decrease by 157.2  
million kg CO2e in  
2023 and 1.1  
billion kg CO2e  
between 2024-  
2030



The cost of recycling incontinence pads versus incinerating them is similar, but the carbon footprint is much lower. Incineration has a Carbon footprint of nearly **22 million**, while recycling has a carbon footprint of **-6 million**.

Urge to Act

# EU-wide Alliance on UI in NHs

OBJECTIVE: Creation of an **EU-wide alliance on the management of UI in nursing homes.**

Umbrella organization leading the Alliance.

Stakeholders who want to participate:

- The **World Federation of Incontinence Patients (WFIPP)**
- The **International Continence Society (ICS)**
- The **European Urology Association (EAU)**
- The **European Geriatric Medicine Society (EUGMS)** and the **SIG on Urinary Incontinence of the EUGMS.**
- The **European Ageing Network (EAN)**
- European Confederation of Care Homes Organizations (ECHO)
- European Urogynaecological Association (EUGA)
- European Specialist Nurses Organization (ESNO)

