

*We live in an information age, but good information is still scarce and hard to find. For the Commission, we work with a wide range of partners in order to generate and share relevant information that can help to guide policies to improve health at all levels in Europe.*

*Chronic conditions in general and diabetes in particular represent a challenge for good health in Europe that is already significant, and which we can expect to become greater in the years to come.*

*We know that action could be taken that would significantly reduce this burden, but that not enough is yet being done.*

*Good indicators to benchmark the problems we face and the steps being taken can be a powerful mechanism to help bring about improvements, as we have already seen in areas where these have been further developed at European level, such as cancer.*

*Our aim in the Health Information Unit of the European Commission is to provide information and analysis for evidence-based development, implementation and evaluation of action for health in the EU, at both Community level and within Member States.*

*European health information can provide added-value through information enabling comparisons in particular, which can in turn support identification, dissemination and application of best practice.*

*Providing such information is not easy. It requires a sustained effort across countries, across organisational and professional boundaries, and involving citizens and the wider community.*

*The BIRO project has worked to engage experts with different backgrounds (academic, policy making, clinical, engineering, statistical) to construct an innovative form of public health information system.*

*The solution that BIRO is producing is a valuable contribution to facing the health challenges of Europe. I welcome the contribution that BIRO has made, and offer my thanks to all those who have contributed to these results. I hope that continued work in this area can help us to build on these steps in order to help address these important European health challenges in the future.*

*Nick Fahy  
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Health and Consumers Directorate-General  
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