EANM reply to the European Commission Call for Evidence on the EU cardiovascular health plan

September 2025

The European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM) welcomes the European Commission's initiative to develop a comprehensive EU Cardiovascular Health Plan. Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) remain the leading cause of mortality in Europe, and a coordinated EU-level strategy is both timely and essential. As the leading scientific society for nuclear medicine in Europe, EANM represents clinicians, researchers, and technologists dedicated to advance non-invasive diagnostics and personalised care.

Championing nuclear medicine in cardiovascular care

Nuclear medicine is a **cornerstone of modern cardiovascular care**, offering **unique, non-invasive quantitative imaging with PET/CT and SPECT/CT**. By combining molecular data with quantitative perfusion, metabolic information, and structural imaging, **nuclear cardiology** enable — in a single, integrative examination - **a uniquely comprehensive assessment of the patient's overall cardiovascular risk profile from early disease detection to therapy selection in a way that is uniquely suited to precision medicine.**

These modalities are essential for the early detection, diagnosis, and management of a **broad spectrum of conditions** including ischemic heart disease, microvascular disease, heart failure, cardiac sarcoidosis, amyloidosis and infectious diseases involving the heart and implanted cardiac devices. This holistic approach helps **clinicians identify patients at highest risk**, **tailor interventions effectively**, and **optimise healthcare resources**, ultimately improving outcomes and reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease across Europe.

To ensure that patients across Europe benefit from these advances, EANM calls for:

- the **integration of nuclear cardiology into clinical** guidelines and care pathways at national and EU levels.
- the **inclusion in reimbursement models** to ensure equitable access for patients, independent of geography or hospital budget.
- **dedicated EU and national research funding** to support innovation in functional cardiovascular imaging, including AI-assisted quantification.

It is crucial that nuclear cardiology is not overshadowed by other imaging modalities but is recognised for its unique ability to provide a comprehensive assessment of patient risk. **Adequate recognition, support, and investment**, e**mbedding EANM's evidence-based guidelines and standards into national and EU-level care protocols** will help harmonise quality of care and foster best practices.

Finally, EANM **highlights the theragnostic potential of nuclear cardiology**, building on its proven success in oncology to pave the way for molecularly targeted diagnostics and therapies, advancing towards a future of more personalised, effective, and efficient cardiovascular care.

Bringing nuclear imaging into preventive cardio health checks

Nuclear imaging - especially quantitative myocardial perfusion imaging and molecular biomarkers - offers a uniquely powerful approach to identify individuals at risk before symptoms occur, detect subclinical diseases, and guide tailored, evidence-based interventions.

EANM strongly supports the concept of a European Cardiovascular Health Check and calls for the **systematic integration of nuclear imaging into the European Cardiovascular Health Check initiative**. Embedding functional imaging into population-level screening and risk assessment would provide a **more comprehensive and precise evaluation of cardiovascular risk** compared to anatomical imaging alone, enabling earlier, targeted interventions that prevent disease progression.

Creating the right ecosystem also means ensuring timely and equitable patient access to advanced imaging technologies. Without **dedicated investment and planning, patients with cardiovascular disease risk competing for resources with other disease areas**, limiting their access to life-saving diagnostics and therapies.

By including nuclear imaging in the European Cardiovascular Health Check, the EU can deliver on its commitment to precision prevention, better outcomes, and reduced health inequalities.

Driving research and innovation in cardiovascular imaging

Innovation in nuclear medicine is driving advances in cardiovascular care, from novel radiopharmaceuticals targeting inflammation and infectious diseases, innervation, amyloidosis, to molecular biomarkers and companion diagnostics that enable truly personalised treatment selection and treatment monitoring. Coupled with AI-powered image interpretation and quantitative analysis, these advances make it possible to detect disease earlier, stratify risk with high precision, and tailor therapies to the individual patient — all core principles of precision medicine. However, **dedicated funding and inclusion in EU research agendas are needed to fully realise this potential.**

EANM urges the European Commission to **prioritise nuclear medicine in within the EU Cardiovascular Health Research Agenda.** Dedicated funding should support clinical trials **validating new radiotracers and advancing imaging approaches** particularly in inflammation imaging and cardio-oncology (e.g., cardiotoxicity monitoring) as well as digital innovation, including AI-based image interpretation and decision-support tools, to further enhance diagnostic accuracy and optimise patient care. By investing strategically in these areas, the EU can accelerate the translation of nuclear medicine innovations into clinical practice, improving outcomes and enabling truly personalised cardiovascular care.

Securing Europe's radiopharmaceutical supply

A reliable and robust radiopharmaceutical supply chain is the backbone of a strong nuclear cardiology practice. Many of Europe's isotope production facilities are aging, putting at risk the availability of essential tracers such as technetium-99m.

In this respect, and in alignment with the European Radioisotopes Valley Initiative, the EANM calls on the EU to **invest in the modernisation of isotope production infrastructure and to secure reliable access for cardiovascular radiotracers.** This investment is critical to ensuring that patients across Europe have uninterrupted access to these life-saving procedures.

The future of cardiovascular care relies on a highly skilled, interdisciplinary workforce

As nuclear medicine becomes increasingly central to cardiovascular diagnostics, there is a pressing need to **expand and modernise training opportunities and foster close collaboration between nuclear medicine, radiology and cardiology, professionals**. EANM believes this collaboration — built upon mutual respect and recognition of each discipline's expertise - must also bring together the technical and clinical competences that are essential for high-quality, patient-centred care. Integrating the expertise of physicians, medical physicists, radiochemists, technologists, and imaging scientists ensures that decisions are made collectively and based on the best available evidence.

The EANM urges for **EU-level support to grow and update nuclear medicine training programmes, to develop dedicated cardiovascular subspecialty curricula and promote interdisciplinary education and joint training initiatives**. This will ensure that Europe not only keeps pace with innovation but continues to lead globally in excellence and quality of cardiovascular care.

Unlocking the power of data for better cardiovascular outcomes

Harnessing the full potential of nuclear cardiology requires robust data integration, harmonisation, and knowledge sharing across Europe. The European Health Data Space and the suggested **Cardiovascular Health Observatory** offer important opportunities to collect, analyse, and disseminate imaging data for research and clinical improvement. EANM strongly supports the **inclusion of nuclear medicine data in these** initiatives.

To achieve this, the European Commission should focus efforts on:

- **expanding equipment accreditation and harmonisation programmes** such as EANM EARL.
- developing **standardised reporting protocols** with harmonised quantitative metrics and interoperable data formats to ensure the quantitative comparability of imaging data across centres.

- **establishing European cardiovascular data hubs** that securely integrate imaging, clinical, genetic and outcome data. Such infrastructures will support continuous, data-driven learning and enable new insights into sex- and gender-specific differences and ethnic variability. It will also facilitate the creation of virtual patient cohorts for simulation studies, which are key steps towards personalised medicine.

Building bridges: connecting cardiovascular, brain, and cancer health strategies

Cardiovascular health does not exist in isolation. Efforts to improve the latter must also consider the connections with neurological and oncological conditions, underscoring the **need for integrated, cross-disciplinary approaches**. The EANM urges the European Commission to ensure that the **Cardiovascular Health Plan is closely aligned with the European Brain Health Mission and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**. By fostering synergies and **supporting multimodal imaging research,** the EU can address shared mechanisms such as inflammation, metabolism, and treatment toxicity — and deliver better outcomes for patients with complex, overlapping health needs. Crucially, this requires investment in cutting-edge technologies such as long field-of-view (LFOV) PET systems and advanced reconstruction algorithms. These innovations enable whole-body, low-dose, dynamic imaging, unlocking new possibilities for systems medicine, multi-organ network analysis, characterizing the distribution of new (radio)pharma, and truly personalised care.

EANM would be pleased to contribute its scientific expertise and clinical network to support the development and implementation of the EU Cardiovascular Health Plan. By integrating nuclear medicine into the strategy, the EU can enhance prevention, diagnosis, and truly personalised care for cardiovascular diseases — while simultaneously advancing broader EU health objectives such as equity, innovation, and sustainability.