COMPETERE
Advancing Innovation Trade and Development

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DISCUSSION & POLICY TAKEAWAYS

PERSONALIZED PREVENTION

Harnessing Science, Technology, and Smarter Nutrition for a Healthier Europe



European Parliament
15 October 2026

WHY THE DISCUSSION MATTERS

On 15 October 2026, Competere and SME Connect organized the roundtable discussion *"Personalized Prevention: Harnessing Science, Technology, and Smarter Nutrition for a Healthier Europe"* at the European Parliament in Brussels. The event was hosted by MEP Kristian Vigenin, with the participation of MEP Brando Benifei.

The discussion took place as advances in nutrition science, artificial intelligence, and wearable technologies are opening new opportunities for personalized prevention, raising questions about scientific validation, accessibility, and citizens' control over their health status.

Key messages

- **People are not averages**. Precision Nutrition offers opportunities to tailor dietary recommendations to individual biological characteristics, behaviors, and health conditions. General nutritional principles remain essential, but personalized approaches can complement them.
- **Health depends on lifestyle, not just nutrients**. Precision Lifestyle expands the perspective beyond food to include physical activity, sleep, mental well-being, and social connections. Prevention must address the multiple factors influencing health.
- **Technology should empower, not control**. AI, wearables, and digital health tools can support more informed decisions, provided they are scientifically validated, trustworthy, accessible, and respectful of individual freedom.
- **Europe has an opportunity to lead**. Connecting scientific research, healthcare, food innovation, and digital technologies can strengthen personalized prevention while creating new opportunities for European competitiveness.

Europe does not need less prevention. It needs better prevention.



The discussion brought together a diverse panel of experts:



Horst Heitz
Chair of the Steering Committee of SME Connect



Pietro Paganini
President, Competere



Frans Kok
Emeritus professor, Wageningen University



Anayanci Masís-Vargas
Nutrition, Physiologist & Neuroscientist



Kristian Vigenin
MEP



Brando Benifei
MEP



MEP Kristian Vigenin opened the discussion by calling for **stronger investment in prevention**, **earlier risk identification**, **and health systems that allow people to lead healthier lives**.

Personalized approaches should complement population-wide measures and reflect individual needs.

Innovation must remain affordable and accessible, with safeguards for sensitive health data.

Trust and clear information, and protection against manipulation are essential to improving health while ensuring that citizens retain control over their decisions.

MEP Brando Benifei emphasized the importance of **building trust in AI** among patients and healthcare professionals.

Regulation should address risks, make technologies understandable, and ensure that users remain in control.

Rules must be clear, coherent, and feasible for smaller businesses to implement.

Protecting sensitive health data while reducing unnecessary complexity can support **responsible innovation**. Cooperation with business organizations can help ensure that SMEs benefit from these opportunities.



Prof. Pietro Paganini challenged one-size-fits-all prevention: people are not averages, and healthier choices require knowledge, tools, and freedom.

This calls for overcoming population-based approaches and policies built around food categories such as ultra-processed foods (UPFs).

Precision Lifestyle goes beyond food: physical activity, sleep, mental well-being, and social connections also play a key role in prevention.

Science, wearables, and AI can support Personalized Prevention, provided their applications are scientifically validated.

Europe should connect research, healthcare, and innovation to improve health, strengthen competitiveness, and protect freedom of choice.

Horst Heitz connected Personalized Prevention with **healthcare costs, data access, and European competitiveness**.

AI can help citizens interpret information, prepare questions for healthcare professionals, and participate more actively in their care.

Practical opportunities should be considered alongside risks, and European innovation should be supported.

Data protection, trust, and access must be balanced, combining technology with human expertise.

Prof. Frans Kok explained how genetics, the gut microbiome, metabolism, and lifestyle shape individual responses to food. Genetic testing alone cannot identify the perfect diet.

Personalized nutrition can improve some health indicators, including weight and triglycerides, but better predictions do not guarantee effective prevention.

General dietary guidance remains valuable for most people.

Personalization can complement it by translating biological, behavioral, and environmental data into effective, affordable dietary advice.





Dr. Anayanci Masís-Vargas highlighted how **meal timing, light exposure, and circadian rhythms influence metabolic responses**, broadening prevention beyond food choices.

Guidance should reflect daily schedules, shift work, culture, and budget, combining established dietary recommendations with validated **individual tools**.

Independent research, nutritional literacy, and affordability remain essential. Citizens need support to understand their bodies and adapt advice to their circumstances, without depending on expensive technologies or widening existing health inequalities.

Scientific progress must translate into better policy. Europe needs more effective prevention: grounded in evidence, responsive to individual needs, and capable of empowering citizens through accessible innovation and informed choices.

Key takeaways:

- **Prevention beyond nutrition**: Personalized approaches should integrate biology, diet, movement, sleep, and environment, complementing established public health guidance.

- **Empowerment through understanding**: Health and digital literacy should help citizens use personalized tools, make informed choices, and retain control over their decisions.

- **Innovation accessible to all**: Affordability, professional support, and data protection are essential to ensuring that personalized prevention benefits people across society.

- **Evidence before implementation**: AI and wearables must demonstrate reliable measurements and meaningful health benefits. Better predictions alone do not guarantee better outcomes.



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