



# Diabetic Eye Conditions (DEC): A Call for International Action

As we approach the **Global Eye Health Summit 2026**, we urge European policymakers to recognize the **crucial needs of the 17 million people** at risk of blindness because of diabetes.<sup>1</sup>

Diabetic eye conditions (DEC) **are a leading cause of vision impairment and blindness in Europe**, affecting millions of people and placing a heavy economic burden on healthcare systems.<sup>2</sup> With the global rise in diabetes and an ageing population, **the incidence of diabetic eye conditions is expected to grow**.<sup>3</sup> Despite advancements in diagnosis and treatment, many people remain undiagnosed and untreated, missing the opportunity to prevent a disability that has a serious impact on individuals and society.<sup>4</sup>

In response to this public health challenge, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and AbbVie launched the **Diabetic Eye Conditions Coalition in June 2024** to raise awareness and address urgent health issues faced by people living with DEC around the world. This coalition welcomes new members to join.

**IAPB and AbbVie have convened global, national, and local partners committed to preventing, screening, and treating DEC in Europe and globally.** Their efforts have demonstrated that it is possible to reduce the number of people with DEC and improve their outcomes through coordinated, strategic actions.

To prevent vision loss and ensure effective and equitable management of DEC, the Diabetic Eye Conditions Coalition calls on policymakers to:



**Integrate eye health** into European diabetes policies, national health strategic plans and primary care models



**Standardize screening protocols** for DEC to ensure consistent and high-quality care across Europe



**Expand comprehensive patient education programs** across settings and age groups to raise awareness and enhance self-management of DEC



**Advance equitable access** to innovative diagnostic, treatment, and assistive technologies for people living with DEC across Europe



**Enhance data collection and data sharing** across health systems to inform regional and national policies that aim to improve care for people living with DEC

**By committing to these actions, we can help prevent vision loss for millions of people and mitigate the broader impact of DEC on healthcare systems and society.**

1. American Academy of Ophthalmology. (2024). Diabetic retinopathy – Europe. 2. Kropp, Martina et al. "Diabetic retinopathy as the leading cause of blindness and early predictor of cascading complications-risks and mitigation." The EPMA journal vol. 14,1 21-42. 13 Feb. 2023, doi:10.1007/s13167-023-00314-8. 3. Yuan, Yuan, et al. "Global trends in diabetic eye disease research from 2012 to 2021." Neural Regeneration Research 19.10 (2024): 2310-2320. 4. World Health Organization. "Diabetic retinopathy screening: a short guide Increase effectiveness, maximize benefits and minimize harm." (2020)