



A SHARED VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF HEALTH IN EUROPE

Paving the way in 2019 and beyond

INTRODUCTION

Europe has made huge advances in terms of health. EU citizens can expect to live up to 30 years longer than they did a century ago. Cancer death rates have fallen by 20% over the last 20 years. HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence but a life-long chronic condition when treated.

At the same time, critical health challenges for Europe remain to be addressed. Our healthcare systems are facing unprecedented challenges from an ageing population, and increased prevalence of chronic diseases driving rising demand on services. Currently, around 50 million EU citizens are estimated to suffer from two or more chronic conditions, and most of these people are over 65.

Inefficient and low-value healthcare remains a huge issue, with one-fifth of the total health expenditure making no or minimal contribution to good health outcomes. Better use is needed of the resources at hand, for instance, incorrect consumption of antibiotics may account up to 50% of all antimicrobials in human healthcare, and poor management of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, leads to costly and debilitating complications that could be avoided.

Thanks to rapidly advancing science, we are moving into a new era of innovation, from genomics to data analytics, that can greatly improve health for EU citizens.

Investing in health means investing in people, thus ensuring the development of a more sustainable, equal and resilient society. Good health contributes to social and economic growth. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise the importance of health. Moreover, the European Pillar of Social Rights, which aims to further develop the social dimension of the EU, clearly states that “Everyone has the right to timely access to affordable preventive and curative health care of good quality.”

In order to address the challenges in healthcare and ensure we make the most of the latest advances in science the EU has a key role to play. According to the Eurobarometer, 70% of EU citizens want more to be done at EU level on healthcare.

Ahead of the EU Health Summit, in Brussels on 29 November 2018, 28 organisations across the health community have put together concrete recommendations for how Europe could develop and take the lead in areas such as research and innovation, health data and digital health, healthcare

organisation and financing, as well as health in all policies.

2019 will be a year of great change for Europe. In addition to Brexit, there will be the election of a new European Parliament, the choice of a new president of the European Commission and of a new Commission, as well as the appointment of a new president of the European Council and of the European Central Bank. The EU five-year budget plan for the years 2021-27, the Multiannual Financial Framework, will also be discussed throughout the year.

Our recommendations for a shared vision for the future of health in Europe call upon the next European Commission and European Parliament to bring about necessary changes.

The European Commission, in particular, should have the tools and governance in place, including at high level, for ensuring a health perspective in all their policies.

This will require cooperation across European Commission Directorate-Generals (DGs) and a less siloed approach to health, research, employment and social affairs, finance, the regions and beyond. This should be steered at a political level by a Vice-President for Health in the new European Commission.

We also call on the European Commission to facilitate a permanent multi-stakeholder forum on health where all organisations representing stakeholders in healthcare, health policy and sectors impacting health in our societies can jointly discuss challenges and solutions together with policymakers. Continued input from patients on EU health policy and projects should also be ensured.

We believe that the EU has an important role to play in ensuring a healthy future for Europe. There is a need to develop coordinated and strategic planning for health research and increase collaborative efforts across Europe to tackle the major health challenges facing Europe. Through better use of health data and measuring health outcomes, health policies can become more evidence-based, value-based and patient-centred. The EU can also support Member States with health system capacity building and strategic investments, and support health education to strengthen the health workforce and empower citizens and healthcare professionals to harness the promise of digital health.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EU ACTION FOR A HEALTHIER EUROPE INCLUDE:

▶ Invest in and support the implementation of evidence-based programmes for prevention

With better prevention, hundreds of thousands of lives can be saved every year in the EU and EU citizens can live their lives in good health. Prevention, including primary prevention, screening and vaccination, as well as investing in the prevention of chronic disease progression, will have the advantage of reducing both health- and socio-economic costs.

▶ Support the implementation of standardised measurements of health outcomes and healthy life years

The EU should establish and help implement, together with patient organisations and other healthcare stakeholders, standards for measuring patient-relevant health outcomes across diseases and conditions, as well as to measure healthy lifespan on a population level.

▶ Identify and spread best practice in medical practice and care pathways

Public health policymakers, healthcare managers, providers and patients across Europe should be able to make decisions based on the best available evidence. Comparative outcomes data will help determine which medical practices, care pathways and providers have demonstrated the best results.

▶ Support health system reform and capacity building

The EU should continue to assist in co-financing health system capacity building through relevant EU funding instruments, in line with European Semester recommendations.

▶ Establish a Forum for better access to health innovation

A multi-stakeholder forum on better access to health innovation should be created to discuss barriers and solutions to further innovation.

► **Facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships with regions and cities**

Fostering an environment of cooperation with local and regional stakeholders would help to further tackle the health inequalities that persist in Europe.

► **The European Commission should have a Vice-President for health to ensure effective coordination and leadership at high level**

Health and health equity should be considered in all European, national, regional policies and actions. The European Commission should have the tools and governance in place, including at high level, for ensuring a health perspective in all policies. The role of a Vice-President for Health in the new European Commission should be established.

► **Establish a Steering Board for Health to ensure optimal coordination of research activities**

A Steering Board for Health should coordinate health programmes under Horizon Europe, guide applicants and create greater visibility for European health research programmes. The EU budget for health research should be increased and ring-fenced.

► **Further the collaboration of public and private sectors in health research**

Set up a cross-sectorial health research Public Private Partnership.

► **Establish a European Health Data Institute to produce a range of health data to inform the work of policymakers, researchers, industry and healthcare providers**

Member States, regions, payers, insurance companies and data donors should make available national data sets to facilitate the European Institute. The information produced by the Institute could help stimulate a European market in health informatics, research and analytics.

See the Annex for our full 20 recommendations to the EU institutions



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