

## **The EU4Health Civil Society Alliance's Statement For a Strong and Stable EU4Health Programme**

The [EU4Health Civil Society Alliance](#) reiterates its concerns over the midterm review of the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) which saw the EU4Health Programme affected by a one billion cut of its total budget.

The EU4Health programme, with an increased budget and specific objectives such as access to medical products and devices, stockpiling of essential products in the event of a crisis, establishing a reserve of healthcare workers, improving disease prevention and digitalising healthcare, aims to support the strengthening of healthcare systems to prepare for future health threats. It provided a much-needed answer to calls to “build back better” and increase Europe’s health resilience. Four years since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, while some progress has been made, the Programme has not yet delivered on these objectives and budget cuts further threaten its ability to do so. It is time to recall the COVID lessons learned and implement clear commitments to address them.

To address these concerns and ensure a fit-for-purpose EU4Health Programme, we call on the EU institutions to:

**Learn from the COVID-19 lessons and keep health as a key EU priority for the next multiannual financial framework (2028-2035).** As discussions will begin on the next MFF, we call on the European institutions to maintain a solid budget for the EU4Health programme. Health is an investment, not a cost. It has been proven that every euro invested in health generates, on average, an economic return of 14 euros<sup>1</sup>. Urgently addressing current challenges, including non-communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance, environmental health and mental health should remain a top priority for the next financial cycle. Improving our healthcare systems, enabling their resilience, and ensuring their ability to respond to future crises require continuous and sustained action. The EU4Health Civil Society Alliance is ready to work proactively and constructively to ensure that the next MFF delivers for European citizens.

**Engage as soon as possible in a meaningful dialogue with civil society organisations on the implications of the EU4Health budget cuts for 2025-2027.** The budget cuts will most probably change the priorities and strategic programming of health financing left for the remaining years of the Framework. In this respect, it is important that the effects of the cuts are as minimal as possible. Programme allocations to the different intervention areas as a proportion of the EU4H budget (e.g. 20% for prevention) should be maintained, to ensure that the different parts of the programme are not disproportionately affected by the reduction. Civil society organisations should be informed of the exact implications of these cuts for the remaining years of the current MFF based on a thorough, transparent assessment by DG SANTE.

**Consider civil society organisations as strategic partners in the operation of the EU4Health programme.** Civil society organisations have been integral to the implementation of the EU4Health programme and have adapted in record time to supporting the execution of a budget that had grown more than ten-fold. However, we find it difficult to access clear, detailed information on EU4Health spending.

---

<sup>1</sup> Masters, R., Anwar, E., Collins, B., Cookson, R., & Capewell, S. (2017). Return on investment of public health interventions: a systematic review. *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 71(8), 827-834

We should be thinking about how the EU4Health programme works and how it can be improved – for example with regard to the current short deadlines which involves a great deal of administrative work. The expertise of civil society organisations is crucial to inform relevant reforms. A structured and informed dialogue between the European Commission and civil society organisations is a major component of the success and absorption of the programme. In addition, before any budget cuts are made, an impact assessment should be carried out, in consultation with civil society organisations, to identify gaps and potential negative consequences.

**Stay true to the EU4Health Programme’s objective to support meaningful engagement of civil society organisations and provide them with the sustainable funding they need to fulfil their public health mission.** We therefore call for a predictable EU4Health Programme which empowers civil society organisations to build and sustain continuous and independent operations. The EU institutions increasingly involve health-focused civil society organisations in a number of EU activities, forums, and expert/stakeholder groups, which is positive from a democratic perspective but cannot happen meaningfully and consistently without adequate financial support.

Signatories:

- European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
- European Patients’ Forum (EPF)
- Alzheimer Europe
- EURORDIS - Rare Diseases Europe
- Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)
- Association of European Coeliac Societies (AOECS)
- Digestive Cancers Europe
- EUROCAM
- EuroHealthNet
- European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG)
- Eurocare
- European Central Council of Homeopaths (ECCH)
- European Cancer Organisation (ECO)
- European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA)
- European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients’ Association (EFA)
- European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA)
- European Health Management Association (EHMA)
- European Heart Network (EHN)
- European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA)
- European Liver Patients’ Association (ELPA)
- European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP)
- European Public Health Association (EUPHA)
- European Respiratory Society (ERS)
- Health Action International (HAI)
- International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF-Europe)
- International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)
- International Federation of Anthroposophical Medical Associations (IVAA)

- Mental Health Europe (MHE)
- Psychedelic Access and Research European Alliance (PAREA)
- Red Cross EU Office
- Smoke Free Partnership
- TB Europe Coalition (TBEC)
- Wemos
- All Policies for a Healthy Europe

