

European Union Funding Programmes

Background information for EuroHealthNet Policy and Strategic Meeting, 24 February 2021

What has happened?

European Union (EU) institutions have agreed on budgetary frameworks for 2021-2027 by the [adoption](#) of the overall **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**. The sectoral EU funds and programmes are being formally launched from early 2021. The MFF includes all programmes and operations to support the implementation of the EU's agreed strategic objectives.

In parallel and complementary to the MFF process, an additional emergency facility of guaranteed loans and grants - the **Next Generation EU (NGEU)** - was agreed. This aims to address immediate and medium-term socio-economic consequences of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 syndemic pandemic. NGEU can boost funding for Member States (MS) until 2024-26. It offers grants and innovative sources for public-private medium-term loans plus innovative ad-hoc programmes via the **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)** which will be agreed directly between MS and the EU by April 2021, with governance via a revised European Semester process.

The **Recovery and Resilience Facility** offers **€672.5 Billion** (€312.5 Billion in grants and up to €360 Billion in loans). Flagship objectives include reforms of health care systems, resilience and access, investments in health promotion and prevention.

Therefore, both the MFF and RRF have direct relevance for health promoting agencies across Europe and for EuroHealthNet's plans, requiring strategic choice.

The next EU Budget will in total offer over **€1.8 Trillion**,
the largest financial stimulus package ever agreed in the EU:
- MFF budget 2021-27 of **€1.074 Trillion**
- NGEU budget 2021-24 of **€750 Billion**

Relevance for EuroHealthNet Members and our Partnership: Funds for health promotion and disease prevention, addressing health equity and social determinants of health

The COVID-19 crisis led to a substantial revision of relevant EU Funds, notably a newly created **EU4Health Programme** (with a substantial increase in funding up to **€5.1 Billion**). Its major themes will include:

- Preparedness for major cross border health threats (including medical supplies, health and care workforce support, improved surveillance, monitoring and use of information).
- Health systems strengthening (health promotion and disease prevention in ageing populations, digital transformation of health systems, access to health for people in “vulnerable” groups) including improved access to medicines and medical devices, tackling cancers and AMR.
- **EU4Health** will earmark 20% of its budget for “prevention” to be defined in detail. 70% will need to be spent in the first 4 years in a pandemic recovery context. This will be supported by plans for a stronger EU role in public health called the “European Health Union”.

But that is not the only EU Programme which will support health improvement in European states, regions and communities. Across the MFF, programmes for research, social investments, education and training, actions in key priorities areas such as green and digital transitions were reviewed. These updates are directly relevant for EuroHealthNet and its Members. For example, **EuroHealthNet receives our major direct (“core”) funding from the European Employment & Social Inclusion Programme (EaSI)** – which will be part of the **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**.

Examples of funds to be considered for investments at all levels now include:

- **European Social Fund+ €87.9 Billion** (of which €676 Million for the Employment and Social Innovation/EaSI strand). ESF+ themes include: living and working conditions, social inclusion and support to most vulnerable, child poverty, equal opportunities and skills/literacy, strong links with the EU Semester process.
- **Horizon Europe €95.5 Billion** (incl. €5.4 Billion from NGEU, plus reinforcement of €4.5 Billion). Themes include climate change and societal transformation, cancer, smart cities, food.
- **InvestEU budget guarantee €26.1 Billion** which is expected to mobilise around €372 Billion from private-public finance initiatives including a Social Investments and Skills “window” of €2.8 Billion. Themes of this ‘window’ include investments in services/skills/infrastructure of general interest, including health promotion and prevention plus social determinants of health.
- **Cohesion Policy Funds €234 Billion** (€191 Billion for European Regional Development Fund and €43 Billion Cohesion Fund), plus a €47.5 billion top-up under a new **ReactEU** programme (part of NGEU). Cohesion Policy aims to reduce regional disparities. Themes include regional health investments and health systems reforms, community-based approach, urban/rural health, smart specialisation.
- **Erasmus+ €26.2 Billion** (cross-border exchange and capacity building of public health workforce, skills for health), **Digital Europe €7.5 Billion** (healthy and active ageing, digital health literacy and skills), **Single Market €4.2 Billion** (consumer protection, healthy/sustainable food supply), **Just Transition Fund €17.5 Billion** (green jobs and skills, social convergence in transitioning regions, investments in health sector/smart specialisation).

What are your views on how we and you can best seek to use new EU Funds in early 2021 so the Executive Board and Office can take the necessary next steps:

1. **Most important Programmes for you and us:** For which EU funds should we and you prioritise and commit resources and capacity to monitor, engage and prepare proposals? Which EU Programmes and funds offer best added value for your agency, and for EuroHealthNet collectively?
2. **The need to clearly set out where we need the investments:** Do we have our policies and practices lined up in terms of how, what and projected outcomes? Should we expand on the “best buys” in health promotion and prevention to also cover health equity? How can vulnerable groups be better protected against future crisis?
3. **What you will do and what you need:** How would your agency like to work with us to engage in EU Programmes, for example helping to prepare and submit funding applications, or help to advocate for priorities in Member State and Programme Committees? What do you need to be able to do that?