

High-level debate

Social inequalities in health: from data to action

Hosted by MEP Vytenis Andriukaitis on behalf of the
EP Interest Group on Health Inequalities, Prevention, and Risk
Factors

25 September 2025, 13.00-15.00 CEST

European Parliament, Brussels - Room SPINELLI 3H1



High-level debate

Social inequalities in health: from data to action

Hosted by MEP Vytenis Andriukaitis on behalf of the
EP Interest Group on Health Inequalities, Prevention, and Risk Factors

25 September 2025, 13.00 - 15.00 CET

European Parliament, Brussels - Room SPINELLI 3H1

Social inequalities in health in Europe are not just a challenge; they are a call to action. Health outcomes are inextricably linked to our socioeconomic context, education, living and working conditions and access to essential services. Addressing these factors is not merely a health imperative; it is essential for preserving Europe's social model and ensuring its competitiveness.

Geopolitical tensions, rising living costs, environmental degradation, climate change, employment conditions and insecurity have an impact on health inequalities. These factors erode disposable incomes and give rise to public anxiety, creating a vicious cycle that undermines societal wellbeing.

The European policy agenda should reinforce initiatives such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, the social dimension of the European Semester, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, the Healthier Together Initiative, the comprehensive approach to mental health, and the upcoming Cardiovascular Health Plan, the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy and the European Affordable Housing Plan. These frameworks can be instrumental in driving a cohesive, health-focused approach that closes opportunity gaps across Europe.

Integrated policy responses are necessary. This requires continuous dialogue between policymakers across sectors, public health experts, and civil society, coupled with active citizen participation, including marginalised groups. ***What can we do to accelerate and ensure impactful European actions to improve health and reduce social inequalities in health?***

This high-level debate will mark the launch of the new report on 'Social inequalities in health in the EU' by [EuroHealthNet](#) and the [Centre for Health Equity Analytics \(CHAIN\)](#), an essential read for decision-makers committed to creating healthier, wealthier and fairer societies.

Join us in debating policies and solutions that not only respond to today's challenges but also secure a healthier, wealthier and fairer future for all Europeans.

Agenda: Social inequalities in health: from data to action

13.00 - Opening remarks

13.15

- **Vytenis Andriukaitis**, MEP, Socialists & Democrats, Chair of the Interest Group on Health Inequalities, Prevention, and Risk Factors
- **Caroline Costongs**, Director, EuroHealthNet
- **Dr Hans Kluge**, Regional Director for Europe, WHO (recorded video message)

13.15 - New data on the persistence of social inequalities in health

13.45

- **Professor Sir Michael Marmot**, Director, Institute of Health Equity, University College London (UCL)
- **Mirza Balaj**, Project Leader, Centre for Health Equity Analytics (CHAIN)/ ROA, Maastricht University: Key messages from EuroHealthNet-CHAIN Report on social inequalities in health in the EU
- **Ingrid Stegeman**, Programme Manager, EuroHealthNet: Key messages from EuroHealthNet-CHAIN Report on social inequalities in health in the EU

13.45 - Panel 1. Advancing the EU agenda to reduce social inequalities in health: the European Commission's perspective

14.05

- **Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic**, Director, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), European Commission
- **Dirk van den Steen**, Head of Unit, State of Health, Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), European Commission

14.05 - Panel 2. Advancing the EU agenda to reduce social inequalities in health: the European Parliament's perspective

14.20

- **Manuela Ripa**, MEP, European People's Party
- **Ignazio Marino**, MEP, Greens/European Free Alliance

14.20 - Panel 3. Advancing the EU agenda to reduce social inequalities in health: what further policies and actions are needed?

14.35

- **Pietro Barbieri**, Vice-President, Civil Society Organisations' Group, and rapporteur on 'Tackling Inequality in people's state of health', European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- **Dorota Tomalak**, Deputy Head of Unit, Natural Resources, European Committee of the Regions
- **Giulio Romani**, Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

14.35 - Debate

14.54

14.54 - Closing remarks and next steps

15.00

- **Silvia Ganzerla**, Policy Manager, EuroHealthNet
- **Vytenis Andriukaitis**, MEP, Socialists & Democrats

