

Brussels, 10th December 2020

Dear Minister Spahn,

An inclusive EU4Health Programme to better meet the needs of people in Europe

Ahead of the second trilogue on the EU4Health European Commission proposal, we acknowledge that the **Programme's governance remains an important element of discussion in negotiation. With this letter**, the [EU4Health Civil Society Alliance](#) wishes to highlight the absolute importance of an **inclusive governance framework with direct, clear and meaningful participation of public interest civil society**.

Only an inclusive EU4Health Programme, which includes public interest and civil society's expertise can unleash its full potential to:

- improve public health; promoting health and wellbeing of people in Europe, as well as preventing diseases;
- respond to the health and social needs of people living in Europe;
- help Member States' efforts in a complementary way by addressing the gaps in different national healthcare systems, beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

Such a framework must facilitate the development of transparent and evidence-informed annual work plans that allow the Programme's priorities to effectively match the needs and expectations of all Europeans, equitably in all EU countries and regions.

As civil society representatives, we and our members experience on a daily basis the **unfair and unjust health inequalities which** exist across Europe and within countries and communities. These differences are most visible as regards the **people's health and the expected healthy life years**, as well as **the capacities of national healthcare systems** which vary significantly all over Europe. Meaningful involvement of public interest civil society can contribute to addressing these inequalities.

In particular, we believe that the **EU4Health Steering Board proposed by the European Parliament, with the direct involvement of public interest civil society**, complements the expertise of the Member States and EU institutions. We believe that the Steering Board will ensure a clear and meaningful role for civil society in the governance of the programme, facilitating co-production and ensuring a concrete platform for civil society involvement.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted that civil society must be involved in shaping health policy at national and European levels, to better connect Europe to Europeans and their needs. The

EU4Health programme represents a unique opportunity to learn the lessons from the crisis and ensure that Europe is more responsive to people's expectations in the future.

A Steering Board with civil society involvement will allow for better coordination of EU funding instruments, given that civil society is already active and expert in different instruments and innovation funding streams. In addition, this would also facilitate the uptake of pilot projects and initiatives across-instruments, for more efficient and impactful use of resources.

Civil society has proved to be an effective partner in previous Health Programmes.¹ When effectively involved in its governance and sustainably resourced, civil society can again be an essential partner to deliver an impactful EU4Health Programme to improve people's health in Europe.

We, the EU4Health Civil Society Alliance of 26 European umbrella organisations with a national and grassroots membership basis in all European countries, ask the German Presidency of the Council to uphold the European Parliament proposal of an EU4Health Steering Board with meaningful and structured participation of civil society in an inclusive, effective, transparent and sustainable way.

On behalf of the EU4Health Civil Society Alliance,

**Marco Greco,
EPF President**



**Alice Chapman-Hatchett
EPHA President**



ABOUT the EU4HEALTH Civil Society Alliance

70% of Europeans want the EU to do more for health, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey. This is why a pool of European organisations came together to ensure that the European institutions will continue to guarantee health protection and promotion. EU4Health brings together organisations that share the vision of a Europe where all people are as healthy as they can be throughout their lives. More information can be found [here](#)

¹ For example, see the mid-term evaluation of the 3rd Health Programme (2014-2020)
https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/programme/docs/2014-2020_evaluation_study_en.pdf