



Statement by the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) on the European Union's (EU) Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post- 2020

Replying to the public consultation on EU funds in the area of investment,
research & innovation, SMEs and single market

On 22 February 2018, EUPHA has submitted its response to the Public consultation on EU funds in the area of investment, research & innovation, SMEs and single market. This consultation on EU funds specifically concerns the area of public health, where EUPHA insists that European funding remains necessary and has added value.

In [March 2017](#), EUPHA reacted to the White Paper on the Future of Europe whereby it urged to ensure that public health and health systems research remain high on the agenda (and budget) of the European Union. While acknowledging that the EU must respect the competence of Member States, there is a clear added value in European action. Both DGs Sante (3rd Health Programme 2014-2020) and Research (Horizon 2020) have been involved in priority setting at European level, including chronic diseases, health systems and tobacco prevention, thereby going far beyond coordination and communication. The 3rd Health programme 2014-2020 financed several projects with successful outcomes and interesting 'lessons to be learned'. These activities have led to an extensive collaborative public health network throughout and beyond the European Union and shows the added value of a European public health strategy.

The results of our recent membership questionnaire on future (public) health priorities clearly emphasize the importance of a European approach to (public) health, as many – if not all – of the listed threats can be targeted through shared policy measures, exchange of good practices and sharing of knowledge of evidence-informed interventions. Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, EUPHA president 2016-2020 is very clear in her first column in the EJPB 2018: *“EUPHA is calling for a renewed and updated health strategy that clearly places health priorities at the heart of European Union policy. Europe has a role and responsibility to play not only in upholding the highest standards to protect the health of European citizens but also by exerting a normative political influence on the importance of health as a value binding people in the new world order.”*

That an active role in public health from EU level is desirable and necessary is also clearly shown in the 2017 State of Health in the EU, where a clear call for EU added value and a more significant role for the European Commission in actions to reduce health inequalities in and between EU states was included. More specifically, actions in the field of prevention, primary care, health workforce, and value-based healthcare.

We cannot understand how a scenario of *doing less together* and discontinuing the Health Programme is listed as an option in the European Commission's [Reflection Paper On The Future Of](#)

[EU Finances](#), when the health is a matter that European citizens cherish dearly and a policy area that emerges as a top concern for European citizens, time after time. In the [Eurobarometer of November 2017](#), health was listed in the top 3 of main concerns held by European citizens. Moreover, 70% of Europeans want the EU to do more for health, according to the [Eurobarometer survey in March 2017](#).

The [Draft report by Committee on Budgets](#) also stresses the importance of health in the post-2020 budget. This report *“calls for the next MFF to reflect the EU’s responsibility to support Member States in reducing health inequalities; considers that, on the basis of the positive outcome of the ongoing actions in this field, the next MFF should include a robust next generation Health programme that addresses these issues on a cross-border basis”*. We agree that good health is a prerequisite for achieving other goals set by the EU and that policies in such fields as agriculture, environment, employment, social issues and inclusion also have an impact on the health of Europeans.

There is a clear role for the EU to step up its efforts to protect European citizens, to facilitate a healthier lifestyle and to reduce the burden on the health systems in Europe. The facilitation of healthier lifestyles should include tobacco and alcohol restrictions, urban healthy planning, safe environment, safe workplace and increased health literacy for all citizens. The EU has a leadership role here and a clear future strategy on the health and wellbeing of European citizens is essential. This would require a dedicated Director-General for public health.

For more information, please contact Dr Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, EUPHA president, president@eupha.org, or Dr Dineke Zeegers Paget, EUPHA executive director, office@eupha.org.



The European Public Health Association, or EUPHA in short, is an umbrella organisation for public health associations in Europe. Our network of national associations of public health represents around 20'000 public health professionals. Our mission is to facilitate and activate a strong voice of the public health network by enhancing visibility of the evidence and by strengthening the capacity of public health professionals. EUPHA contributes to the preservation and improvement of public health in the European region through capacity and knowledge building. We are committed to creating a more inclusive Europe, narrowing all health inequalities among Europeans, by facilitating, activating, and disseminating strong evidence-based voices from the public health community and by strengthening the capacity of public health professionals to achieve evidence-based change.

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