



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 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 argues strongly 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 that public health and health systems research must 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. This is recognised in the way that 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 important 'lessons to be learned'. These activities have facilitated creation of an extensive collaborative public health network throughout and beyond the European Union and show 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 to health 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 column in the first edition of 2018 of the European Journal of Public Health: *“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, which included 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. More specifically, it called for 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 one option in the European Commission's [Reflection Paper On The Future Of EU Finances](#), when health is a matter that European citizens cherish dearly and the 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 three 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 affairs, 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 lifestyles. The facilitation of healthier lifestyles should include effective action on tobacco and alcohol, healthy urban planning, safe environments, safe workplaces and increased health literacy for all citizens. The EU can also support those Member States who wish to pursue closer collaboration between their health systems to achieve better economies of scale, strengthen financial sustainability and improve access to high quality care. The EU has a leadership role in all these areas and must have a clear strategy for the future health and wellbeing of European citizens. EUPHA believes that this cannot be achieved without a dedicated Directorate-General for health that acts as the guardian of the Treaty for ensuring a high level of health protection across all the policy areas in the EU but also equally importantly acts as a driver for innovation and supports Member State actions seeking to promote health and sustain health systems.

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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