



## Editorial

### Charting the road to gender equity: women's health in the EU

In the past few months, the EU's policy priorities for the next five years have begun to crystallise. Even so, among the chaotic process of the selection of candidate Commissioners, their hearings being prepared, and their mission letters sent, nothing is yet set in stone. On health equity, EPHA has been keeping a close eye on developments concerning the Commissioner-designate of Equality.

The context within which these developments take place is not lost on us. It is concerning that Hadja Lahbib will serve as Commissioner for Preparedness and Crisis Management first, and for Equality second. Even so, we have seen the discussion on equality take place at the very top level with von der Leyen doing her utmost to ensure a gender balance in her new team. That balance is not quite there; only 11 out of 27 Commissioners are women. The numbers matter, but more important are concrete actions that remove barriers partly responsible for this imbalance.

What we read in the mission letter for Equality is encouraging; all Union of Equality Strategies are either continued or relaunched. Further, at the very top we can read a priority in the form of a **Roadmap for Women's Rights** to be released on International Women's Day 2025. We do not know how this will be translated into concrete action but we do know that there are plenty of opportunities for increased action on **women's health**.

Thanks to our members and partners, EPHA has been advocating on women's health over the past year. For example, through work done with the European Institute of Women's Health and a former MEP, Samira Rafaela, launching a [manifesto](#). Momentum is building, and EPHA intends to seize it. As the European agenda on women's rights consolidates, the conversation on women's health remains central, reflected in this newsletter and the featured guest articles.

Our member VAS explains about women and [peripheral artery disease](#), while IDF Europe expands on [diabetes](#) and women's health. In addition, a guest article from Eurocentral Lesbian\* Community (EL\*C) focuses on [access to healthcare for lesbian, bi, and queer women](#). We are also anticipating the work of our member ECO on a paper on women and cancer. In addition to the theme of women's health, we include a range of other topics. We share insights on [Roma health](#) through the event held with Equinet and OHCHR in September. In addition, we highlight EPHA's work on [Zero Hidden Hunger](#), in which we address micronutrient deficiencies across Europe. The work EPHA does in this project is emblematic of what we do best: facilitating the conversation between policymakers, researchers, citizens, and marginalised and vulnerable communities.

Though it is only October, the year is drawing to a close but also approaching the beginning of the next 5 years of the von der Leyen Commission. Now is the time to ensure that public health and health equity are prominently featured on the agenda; not only by monitoring policy developments, but by taking initiative.



**Tomas De Jong**

Policy Manager, EPHA

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## This Month's Top Stories



### Women and Diabetes: tackling hidden health disparities

*By Sabine Dupont and Maxence Prizzi, International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF)*

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### Invisible women: lesbian, bi, and queer women's (lack of) access to healthcare

*By Aïda Yancy and Ilaria Todde, Eurocentral Lesbian\* Community (EL\*C)*

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### Peripheral Arterial Disease in women – are there any differences compared to men?

*By Agata Stanek, Katalin Farkas and Mariella Catalano, from the Executive of VAS- European Independent Foundation in Angiology/Vascular Medicine*

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## EPHA Updates

## World Mental Health Day Joint Statement: Deliver on promises and honour commitments on mental health

EPHA joins 31 European civil society organisations urging immediate action to improve mental health support across Europe. The statement calls for a comprehensive strategy, better access to services, and stronger preventative measures, particularly for youth and marginalised groups, to address the growing mental health challenges driven by economic instability and digitalisation.

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## Online pathways to health equity: digital health literacy in the EU's Digital Education Plan

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## SEEHN and EPHA partner to strengthen public health in southeast Europe

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## Debunking green transport myths: Facts & success stories you need to know

EPHA has published five infographics to debunk myths about clean transportation, using examples from European cities. The infographics highlight how sustainable urban mobility, like bike lanes and public transport, lowers emissions, improves health, and creates more liveable cities, promoting informed choices for a greener future.

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## Zero Hidden Hunger EU

EPHA is proud to be part of the Zero Hidden Hunger EU Horizon Project, which aims to tackle micronutrient deficiencies—commonly known as "hidden hunger"—affecting millions across Europe. This project brings together experts and stakeholders to develop innovative, long-term solutions to improve nutrition and public health.

Our role includes leading a policy lab and an interview series with policymakers and researchers to identify gaps, explore solutions, and bridge research with practical policy measures. In the coming months, we'll share insights from this work, helping shape more effective public health strategies.

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**Does the new Commission care about air pollution?**

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**Between art and science: Policy-making for health in the EU**

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**EPHA contribution to TRIS notification 2024/0388/SE: Draft act amending the Alcohol Act**

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## EPHA Events



**Data-informed Health Policy Webinar, 6 November, 10:00 – 11:30 CET**

Join us for a webinar exploring **the role of high-quality data in shaping effective public health strategies**.

Experts from **civil society** and **research institutions** will discuss key initiatives, including the **European Health Data Space**, disaggregated data for health equity, lifestyle interventions, and patient empowerment.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



## Roundtable – Monitoring effective access to quality healthcare for Roma and racialised communities

We co-organised a Roundtable with Equinet, and the OHCHR on 25 September 2024. The event focused on experiences on health from the EU Roma Framework and how these can be leveraged in wider anti-racism policy. It approached this from the role of equality bodies and civil society, for example on data collection and monitoring frameworks.

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## News From Members



### Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE)

Food inflation, highest in 18 months according to FAO

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### European Respiratory Society (ERS)

Milestone for health in Europe as revised air quality law confirmed by EU Environment Council

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**International  
Diabetes Federation  
Europe (IDF)**

Nominations for the IDF Europe Advocate Prize 2024 are open!

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**Association of  
Schools of Public  
Health in the  
European Region  
(ASPER)**

EPH Pre-conference:  
Empowering Public Health  
to Lead Digital Health  
Transformation

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**The European  
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for Organ  
Transplantation**

The ESOT Legacy Award  
2025

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**British Society of Lifestyle  
Medicine**

World Food Day – Invest in our  
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and Optics (ECOO)**

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Sight Day

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