

Press Release - for immediate publication

Brussels, 17 July 2025



EPHA Reaction to Commission MFF Proposal: Time to Reinvest in People's Health, Not Just Market Efficiency

The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) expresses serious concern at the direction of the European Commission's proposal for the revised Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), particularly the shrinking of the health budget and its shift toward a competitiveness-driven agenda.

Rolling back dedicated EU investment in health would undo the progress made in recent years and directly undermine the Union's ability to prepare for and respond to future challenges. Health is a fundamental right enshrined in the EU Treaties, a pillar of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and a central component of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Discontinuing EU-level support for public health, especially in efforts around prevention, resilience, and equity, would undermine Europe's ability to withstand health crises, ongoing shortages in health workforce shortage, economic shocks, environmental breakdown, and geopolitical instability. The EU4Health programme was created to do just that: protect people from cross-border health threats, improve access to care, and strengthen health systems and workforces. These objectives remain vital for a competitive and cohesive Europe.

Milka Sokolović, Director General of EPHA, stated:

"Health must remain a strategic and cross-cutting priority for the European Union, not simply a means to boost the competitiveness of the healthcare industry. We need the next financial framework to reflect this reality, upholding resilience, equity, and the common good across all policies. This is a moment to reinvest in health as a pillar of European strength."

EPHA supports the [EU4Health Civil Society Alliance \(CSA\) Health4Europe blueprint](#), which offers a public-interest roadmap for reclaiming the programme's founding values. It includes:

- Health equity and solidarity at the core of the programme's mission
- Transparent and participatory governance with civil society leadership
- Investment in prevention and social, environmental, and commercial

determinants of health

- Robust safeguards against conflicts of interest in programme design and implementation

These demands align with the values voiced by European citizens themselves. The European Citizens' Panel on the future of EU finances [underscore](#) the importance of a budget that ensures long-term sustainability and resilience, and that invests in people's health, education, climate action, and wellbeing.

Strengthening prevention: Europe's smartest investment

To prepare for future crises, reduce costs and pressure on society and healthcare systems, the EU must double down on prevention. Chronic disease, health inequities, and growing health challenges linked to an ageing and sicker society and planet will not be solved by industrial competitiveness and efficiency gains alone. Preventive action, from healthier environments and products to stronger social cohesion, is key to protect human capital and reduce long-term costs.

Sara Bertucci, Policy Manager at EPHA, added:

"We urgently need to place comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention at the center of EU investment priorities. That means funding cross-sectoral action to tackle the root causes of ill-health, from poverty and harmful products to pollution and climate breakdown. Keeping people healthy is fair, smart, and cost-effective."

As health, climate, and geopolitical threats continue to converge, the EU must reinforce, not abandon, its commitment to public health. EPHA calls on EU leaders to ensure that health remains a core value and shared responsibility rather than a tool of market logic.

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Co-funded by
the European Union

Note for editors:

The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) is a change agent – Europe's leading NGO alliance advocating for better health: <https://epha.org/>

PLAN'EAT is a Horizon Europe research project focused on transition towards healthier, more sustainable food behaviours. It applies a systemic, co-creation approach at three levels: macro (food system), meso (food environment), and micro (individual). Running from 2022 to 2026, the project brings together 24 partners across 11 EU countries, combining expertise from social, political, economic, agricultural, nutritional, and health sciences. EPHA leads the creation and implementation of the Living Labs and runs a Brussels-based Policy Lab.

Questions or inquiries?

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