



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

The Director-General

Brussels
SANTE.C.4/AP

Dr. Milka Sokolović
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Subject: Your letter on the EU4Health 2025 Operating Grant Procedure

Dear Ms Sokolović,

On behalf of President Von der Leyen, I would like to acknowledge your letter and the role that NGOs and civil society organisations, including the EU4Health Civil Society Alliance, play in the European healthcare sector and, in particular, in safeguarding and advancing public health across Europe. Your dedication to promoting health, preventing disease, and ensuring that EU health policy effectively reaches citizens is deeply valued.

This role has always been well recognised in the EU4Health Programme as well as in the 2025 Annual Work Programme ⁽¹⁾ which provides a basis for action grants that are open to NGOs and civil society organisations. These actions should enable cross-stakeholder collaboration on important healthcare topics such as cardiovascular health, cancer, pandemic preparedness, antimicrobial resistance, digital health, and many more.

The 2025 Annual Work Programme contributes significantly to actions addressing crucial healthcare needs within the EU, such as crisis preparedness, prevention and treatment of diseases, health systems and healthcare workforce, digital as well as flagship actions on fighting cancer and those addressing the new priorities 2025-2029 on cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases.

As you are aware, out of the initial budget for the EU4Health Programme of EUR 5.8 billion for the years 2021-2027, provided for in Article 5 of the EU4Health Regulation,

⁽¹⁾ The 2025 Annual Work Programme was adopted on 23 July 2025.

EUR 1 billion was reallocated to other political priorities following the revision of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework. The budgetary cut has significant consequences influencing the scale of planned health initiatives and impacting actions under the EU4Health Programme from 2025 onwards.

With this reduction, it has become essential to allocate resources on areas and instruments which best ensure that the programme can still deliver meaningful results despite the constrained budget.

The analysis of these implications required time - as new political guidelines and priorities had to be carefully taken into account in the identification of future actions. In this process it was particularly important to strike a balance between continuity of existing commitments and the integration of new policy directions. I must be clear that, in preparing the 2025 Annual Work Programme, the Commission followed the procedures set out in the EU4Health Regulation.

Despite the financial constraints introduced by the budgetary cut, the 2025 Annual Work Programme nonetheless secures dedicated funding opportunities for NGOs in the form of action grants, thereby maintaining their important role in fostering participation, supporting implementation, and amplifying the programme's impact on the ground. I take the opportunity to draw your attention to the call for proposals recently launched by HaDEA ⁽²⁾.

The framework partnership agreement (FPA) referred to in your letter is based on the 2024 Annual Work Programme, adopted on December 5, 2023, before the EUR 1 billion budget cut. As described in that work programme, this FPA was launched "*in view of potentially providing funding for their functioning during 2025 and 2026*" through operating grants. Furthermore, the call text emphasised that the FPA "*does not create any legitimate expectations or entitlement to get them*" ⁽³⁾.

The amendment of the FPA was necessary to implement the "[Guidance on funding for activities related to the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Union legislation and policy](#)", issued by the Commission before the adoption of the 2025 EU4Health Work Programme.

In response to your specific request for the publication of a 2025 EU4Health operating grant call, allow me to clarify that this is not possible in the absence of a corresponding call reference in the 2025 Annual Work Programme.

⁽²⁾ [New EU4Health calls for proposals under the 2025 Work Programme - European Health and Digital Executive Agency \(HaDEA\)](#)

⁽³⁾ FPAs, in general, set out the framework, objectives, and conditions governing potential grants to pre-selected entities. Their purpose is to simplify the grant procedure and reduce administrative burden where possible, for example by streamlining supporting documents or facilitating planning. However, the signature of an FPA does not guarantee nor pre-allocate Union funding.

For funding to be provided, the corresponding action must first be included in the relevant Work Programme, under the Commission's decision-making authority, and then, the relevant procedural steps must be completed for awarding the grant. These steps may culminate in the signature of a specific grant agreement, which will constitute the legal and contractual basis for the implementation of the action by the beneficiary and the provision of Union funds.

On your request for further engagement with you in the context of the EU4Health Programme, DG SANTE remains available should you require any further clarifications.

I look forward to working together in building a healthier and safer Europe.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]

Sandra GALLINA

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Mr M. MARSELLA
Mr A. PERES
Ms C. MODORAN
Ms M. MOYA DÍAZ
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