

## Joint Statement | July 2020

### EU health organisations react to cuts in EU health programme amidst ongoing COVID-19 crisis: the time to invest in a healthy future is now

After several days of debates and compromises, the European Council reached a crucial agreement on the budget underlying the COVID-19 recovery and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) on Tuesday 21 July. The deal, however, **represents a substantial setback for health at European level.**

The proposed €9.4 billion **EU4Health** Programme, featuring double funding from Next Generation EU and the MFF, has been **significantly reduced to €1.7 billion**, jeopardising the EU's ability and ambition to strengthen healthcare systems and public health protection across EU countries. The funding for the Horizon Europe programme has also been hit by the Council's cuts, with a budget dropping from the proposed €94.4 billion to €80.9 billion. This will have a considerable impact on health research and innovation, an area where the EU aims to gain global leadership.

A few months ago, this group called on European leaders to recognise that the pandemic has shown once again that more [EU action on health is more urgently needed than ever](#). We had also emphasised that the COVID-19 recovery plans should not be focused on going back to the 'old normal' but rather should be **taking our health systems to the next level.**

**Unfortunately, despite the European Commission's proposals and the European Parliament's support, the Council's decision seems to reflect a will to drive Europe in the opposite direction, without granting European health systems a much-needed boost from an ambitiously-resourced EU Health programme. Even though the pandemic is still raging, and despite the efforts of healthcare professionals, authorities and researchers and the losses suffered by European people, public health is clearly still not being treated as a key priority.**

While welcoming the European Parliament's immediate [reaction](#) defending the previously allocated budget, **we urge the EU institutions to work together with European leaders to review this decision and to stand firm behind a strong budget for long-term health action. People's health and well-being must be at the heart of EU recovery plans.**

Europe cannot wait for the next pandemic for more EU action on health. The time to invest in a healthy future is now.

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## ABOUT THE EU4HEALTH CIVIL SOCIETY ALLIANCE

70% of Europeans want the EU to do more for health, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey. This is why a pool of European organisations came together to ensure that the European institutions will continue to guarantee health protection and promotion. EU4Health brings together organisations that share the vision of a Europe where all people are as healthy as they can be throughout their lives. More information can be found [here](#)