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Investing in Health – A Call to Action

We, the members of the EU Health Coalition – a multi-stakeholder initiative representing 49 organisations from across the healthcare sector – call on the health ministers of OECD countries meeting in Paris on January 23 to make a clear statement on the need to continue to invest in health systems.

The health of our populations is not only an important societal objective in its own right, but also a prerequisite for prosperity, societal cohesion and wellbeing, sustainability and economic growth. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated this in stark terms, with a health security crisis quickly turning into an economic and societal crisis with consequences that we are still living with today. Only through an unprecedented mobilisation and collaboration between all governmental, civil society and private actors did we overcome the pandemic. However, during the last few years, the memory of that crisis has faded away from the political agenda, as other national and global issues and emergencies are in the spotlight. The financing of health reflects this worrying development. Health budgets are now contracting while challenges facing health and social care systems are mounting: an ageing population and increased burden of chronic diseases, unmet medical needs including for underserved populations, a health workforce crisis and the rising threat of antimicrobial resistance, infectious diseases and global warming, to name a few.

In this context, the EU Health Coalition would like to remind governments and policy makers that spending on health is not primarily a cost in the annual budget, but an investment in the future.

- Prevention and early detection of disease such as cancer or diabetes means more people staying healthy for longer. It also means that those who do fall ill receive care when the disease is easier to treat, avoiding complications and disease progression that not only result in ill health and premature death, but also in higher costs for the health and social care systems.
- Access to and use of health data, diagnostics and digital tools can lead to more efficient and personalised care, support healthcare professionals in their work and enable patients to more effectively manage their own health.
- Advanced therapies provide the opportunity to transform and potentially cure rare and genetic diseases, saving lives or replacing life-long intervention that is burdensome for both patients and healthcare professionals.
- People living with chronic disease who are enabled to manage their health through effective interventions and tailored coordinated care programs can continue to be part of the workforce and contribute to society.

Today, fiscal and budgetary rules and practices often prevent strategic investments in health that would lead to better health and lower costs for society in the long-term. This problem cannot be solved by health ministers alone but require an approach that involves all ministries and levels of government. **We therefore hope that the OECD Health Ministerial Meeting will lead to a strong case for investing in health that will also translate into concrete action at the international, national and regional level in collaboration with all stakeholders.** The partners of the EU Health Coalition are ready to support and take part in these important discussions, and help making the case for health as a fundamental investment priority for our societies and future generations.



Background information:

The EU Health Coalition, a multi-stakeholder initiative representing 49 organisations from across the healthcare sector, was created following the first-ever EU Health Summit, in November 2018. The Coalition promotes a shared vision of health in Europe, based on jointly developed recommendations. The purpose is to ensure that health remains high on the political agenda amid the geopolitical, economic and energy crises unfolding in Europe and to champion the changes required to address the unprecedented challenges that an ageing population and an increasing prevalence of chronic diseases pose to healthcare systems and citizens. The EU Health Coalition is composed of patient organisations, EU research-oriented medical societies, industry organisations, healthcare providers, regional and local health authorities and other relevant stakeholders, who all share a common vision.

To find out more about the work of the EU Health Coalition please visit our website [here](#). Read our manifesto for the 2024 European elections [here](#).