



Graça Carvalho welcomes the creation of a European Biomedical Research Agency, but asks for funds to match the ambition

Brussels, 16-09-2020

MEP Maria da Graça Carvalho (EPP) praises the decision to create a **European Biomedical Research Agency**, announced today by the President of the European Commission, **Ursula Von der Leyen**, during her **State of the Union** speech.

"The existence of an agency dedicated to scientific research in the health field is **something I have been striving for since I was rapporteur for the Horizon 2020 framework program**, at the beginning of the last decade", recalls the MEP. With this announcement, she adds, von der Leyen "reinforces the message that, **without a clear commitment to health, everything else is called into question**".

In July, Maria da Graça Carvalho was one of the first proponents - together with the chairman of the IMCO Commission (Internal Market and Consumer Protection), Petra de Sutter - of an **open letter addressed to the European Commission**, co-signed by 46 other MEPs and several stakeholders in the fields of Science and Health. The letter called for **strengthened leadership and greater coordination** at European level with regard to **scientific research in the field of health**.

The signatories felt that the **COVID-19** crisis demonstrated that a coordinated response to the challenges of health and scientific research in the field of biomedicine requires **prior planning and a long-term commitment based on a broader vision**. Therefore, they suggested the creation of a "**European Health Research Council**" as part of an EU commitment to the implementation of a Health Union.

Now that the Commission's readiness to take this step is confirmed, Maria da Graça Carvalho considers it time to "**secure the financing that supports these ambitions**". In March, the Commission announced an ambitious healthcare investment package, Eu4Health. However, the 9.4 billion euros proposed by the Commission for this initiative dropped to 1.67 billion in the Budget proposal approved in July by the European Council.

"**The funds for health research are also being called into question at the moment**, since the **Council's proposal for the Horizon Europe framework program also falls short of what was expected** by the Commission and the European Parliament", recalls Maria da Graça Carvalho.

Moreover, she concludes, the announcement made by the President of the Commission "is yet **another strong argument in favour of increasing the funding of Science and Innovation** at European level, namely from Horizon Europe".