



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen
The President

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Dear Honourable Member,

I would like to thank you and the co-signatories for your letter calling for a strong European leadership in health research and the implementation of a European Health Research Council.

Faced with the unprecedented global pandemic, the European Union stood determined and united to overcome the crisis. European health, research and innovation policies have been at the forefront of these efforts since the very beginning.

On 28 May, the Commission proposed the EU4Health programme with an ambitious budget of €9.4 billion (in 2018 prices) for the 2021-2027 period. Regretfully, the recent European Council Conclusions of 21 July 2020 reduced the EU4Health programme to a budget of €1.67 billion. The financing programmes, their structure and budgetary envelopes are subject to the final outcome of the discussions between the European Parliament and the Council on the elements of the recovery package, in accordance with the respective adoption procedure.

The EU4Health programme proposed by the Commission in May 2020 is designed to strengthen the Union's health crisis preparedness and response capacity and to reinforce the health systems' resilience as well as the healthcare workforce in the European Union. These are two key pillars that need appropriate funding resources.

Fair distribution of medicines, medical devices and other crisis relevant products, ensuring their affordability and supporting innovations in health should be seen as a cornerstone in building accessible, innovative and resilient health systems.

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Furthermore, health is intrinsically related to other EU policies as stated in the Treaty. Additional financial support for health-related actions may come also from other EU Funds and policies, such as the Research and Innovation Framework programme, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe programme, Recovery and Resilience Facility, European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund Plus, InvestEU programme and REACT programme.

Horizon Europe and the EU4Health programme will be implemented in a coherent, effective and efficient way, in order to ensure maximum synergies between them and to achieve maximum public health impact. Horizon Europe will bring new knowledge and new innovative solutions, while the EU4Health programme will focus on making the best possible use of the new knowledge for the benefit of citizens and health systems.

The EU4Health programme can also link Horizon Europe funded research actions with health investments from other funds and programmes. It will facilitate collaboration among Member States implementing research results achieved with EU financial support, with the aim to strengthen development and deployment of research results.

Horizon Europe includes a framework for feedback to policy that will be used as a starting point to establish the integration and implementation of research results into public health policies and initiatives in the EU4Health programme. In addition, specific efforts will be made to ensure continuous and fruitful knowledge translation. This will include regular identification of the most mature and implementable research results and their transfer and preparation for wider scale uptake and implementation.

In order to stimulate synergies, the Commission will continue to organise joint meetings of the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases and the Horizon Europe Health Programme Committee.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the European Commission's determination to increase and strengthen the financial support for health research and public health in Europe. I trust in a fruitful cooperation with the European Parliament to make this happen.

Yours faithfully,



Ursula von der Leyen