

## **Protecting people's health: the Council and the European Parliament agree provisionally on the EU4Health programme for 2021-2027**

The German presidency of the Council and the European Parliament reached a provisional deal on the EU4Health programme for 2021-2027. With a budget of EUR 5.1 billion, the new reinforced programme provides a strong basis for Union action in the health field based on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. It comes at a time when EU citizens still experience the impact of a major health threat and the resulting human suffering and severe socio-economic consequences.

This agreement shows the EU's determination to protect the health of its citizens. This programme, with its budget and scope, gives our Union the tools and capacity to better prepare for and cope with future health crises. At the same time, it allows a strong focus on long-term health issues, such as cancer and mental health. I expect that EU4Health will have a clear EU value added in complementing member states health policies.

*Jens Spahn, German Federal Minister of Health*

The EU4Health programme aims to support the national policies of the member states and to promote coordination between them in order to improve human health throughout the EU in particular by:

- supporting health promotion and disease prevention
- contributing to the protection of people in the Union from serious cross-border threats to health
- increasing the use of digital tools and services in the health area, including by contributing to the establishment of a European Health Data Space
- increasing cross-border cooperation, i.e. by European Reference Networks
- supporting global commitments and health initiatives by international organisations, in particular the World Health Organization (WHO)

One specific objective of the programme is to support actions complementing national stockpiling of essential crisis relevant products at Union level. This should be done in synergy with other Union instruments, programmes and funds, such as RescEU, and in close cooperation with relevant Union bodies. It will also support actions to allow medical, healthcare and support staff to be mobilised in a crisis area.

The agreement ensures that the programme will also address long-term public health issues such as, the prevention and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases, notably cancer, as well as the improvement of mental health and the reduction of health inequalities.

The agreement provides for a strong governance mechanism and effective decision making. To this aim a EU4Health Steering Group composed of representatives of the member states and the Commission is established. The group will be consulted on the annual work programmes and will monitor the implementation of the programme. The annual work programme is established through adoption of an implementing act following a vote by member states' representatives in a committee.

### **Background and next steps**

The European Commission presented its proposal for the EU4Health Programme (2021-2027) in May 2020. This was followed by the adoption of the Council's position in October and the start of the negotiations with the Parliament in November 2020. The provisional agreement will now be submitted to EU member states' permanent representatives for endorsement.

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