

# TOWARDS A EUROPEAN UNION TRULY COMMITTED TO GLOBAL HEALTH!



Three years ago, the world was confronted by one of the biggest health crises in recent decades.

From the United Nations General Assembly to the G7, and from the European Council to the European Parliament, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic was at the heart of discussions and on top of political agendas. Extraordinary measures were implemented, and unprecedented international efforts took place to respond to the threats posed by COVID-19 to safeguard public health.

As of May 2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has lifted the status of “public health emergency of international concern” for COVID-19. Although the pressure on health systems appears to have decreased, it is crucial to keep in mind that new health threats can emerge and spread rapidly, as the WHO has warned.

**The question is not if, but when the next pandemic will strike.** In our increasingly connected world, a health crisis can never be local, and therefore poses a threat to the European Union (EU) and its partner countries. It is thus our collective responsibility to keep up the momentum to ensure preparedness for the management of and response to future pandemics, to tackle inequalities in access to health services and products, and to ensure that global health remains at the heart of the political agenda.

**In addition to these escalating health risks, health inequalities are growing exponentially.**

Despite significant progress, more than half of the world's population still lacks access to primary healthcare and essential health services. These persistent inequalities threaten the progress made towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3), which aims to guarantee health and well-being for all.

**The European Union is a major player in the global health architecture**, as demonstrated by its contributions to the fight against COVID-19 through the coordination of Member States throughout the pandemic. Since 2020, the EU has made further notable contributions: from the adoption of the new Global Health Strategy, to its participation in the Pandemic Fund, without forgetting its contribution to the Global Fund replenishment. At the 6th EU-AU Summit, the EU also committed itself to supporting the health sovereignty of the African continent.

At the European Parliament level, the creation of a special European parliamentary Committee dedicated to investigating the European response to the pandemic, as well as the efforts of MEPs to obtain additional funding for a strong Health Union, have contributed to the promotion of coherent and effective global health policies. **Despite the end of the current pandemic threat, the European Union must continue its efforts in global health** by implementing its Global Health Strategy and strengthening its leadership at the global level.

“ ***The European Parliament, the only European institution elected by direct universal suffrage, has a key role to play in these efforts [to support global health]. The next parliamentary term (2024-2029) is crucial: it will be the last before the end of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*** ”

**The European Parliament, the only European institution elected by direct universal suffrage, has a key role to play in these efforts**, as it can strongly encourage the implementation of coherent global health policies, promote access

to health for all, and guarantee the transparency of public funding linked to biomedical research and innovation. The next parliamentary term (2024-2029) is crucial: it will be the last before the end of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Together, let's strive for a European Union that places global health at the core of its concerns and builds a roadmap with its partners to meet future health challenges. The health of each individual cannot be dissociated from the health of all!**





# To the candidates in the 2024 European Parliament elections, we call on them to:

## PRIORITY 1

Reinforce the European Union's role as a true global health champion, and support its partners' health sovereignty by ensuring that:

- **The EU Global Health Strategy (GHS) is endorsed and backed by sufficient and adequate financing**, and the European Commission is held accountable for its commitments. To this end, the European Parliament (EP) must hold the Commission accountable for its political and financial commitments toward the Strategy until 2030. During the GHS midterm review, the EP should assess the progress made and address a set of recommendations to the Commission and Member States.
- **The European Parliament strengthens cooperation between the DEVE and SANT committees** to facilitate the monitoring of the GHS' progress and to improve exchanges with civil society stakeholders.
- **The European Parliament ensures health remains an essential pillar of the EU-AU strategy by supporting the African health sovereignty program.** To this end, the Commission must report to the Parliament on the progress and advances made towards the 6th EU-AU Summit commitments.
- **The EU continues to provide leadership and adequate financial support to global health** through its bilateral and multilateral programming. The Parliament must continue to demonstrate its support to initiatives that effectively deliver better health, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, notably by calling on the EU Commission to increase its contributions to these initiatives during their upcoming replenishments.

## PRIORITY 2

Advance global health equity by ensuring that R&D policies are transparent and focused on addressing social needs and benefiting people rather than markets, by guaranteeing that:

- **The negotiations on the revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation include concrete provisions** ensuring the safety, efficiency, accessibility and availability of medicines and other health technologies, based on concrete and adequate transparency measures, and that the new legislation contributes to the achievement of global public health objectives.
- **European taxpayer money invested into biomedical R&D in both current and future EU research programmes provides a public return on investment.** The Parliament must continue to call on the Commission to include access conditions to its R&D funding.
- **EU R&D investments are driven by public health needs and deliver strong social impact.** The Parliament must ensure that poverty-related and neglected diseases are prioritised in both current and future EU research programmes.

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