

Brussels, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**HEALTH INSURANCE FUNDS AND HEALTH MUTUALS WELCOME  
EUROPE'S RECOVERY PLAN FOR THE NEXT GENERATION**

*"This is the moment for Europe to put an emphasis on better health care systems for all,  
based on the principles of solidarity, democracy and not for profit!"*

*Christian Zahn, AIM President*

**AIM appreciates that solidarity, cohesion and convergence will drive Europe's recovery**

AIM, the umbrella organisation of health insurance funds and health mutuals, welcomes the recovery plan: "Europe's moment: 'Repair and prepare for the Next Generation'" presented on 27 May by the European Commission. The proposal shows that Europe is more than a mere economic cooperation. AIM, the umbrella organisation of health insurance funds and health mutuals, recalls that national stand-alone decisions cannot provide the long-term solutions that this massive Covid-19 crisis requires. As EU Member States are geographically close and economically interdependent, national measures risk proving ineffective. Solidarity and equality should be the basis of all European actions and lead to a better future for the generations to come. AIM welcomes the fact that, beyond the health dimension, the EU addresses the social dimension and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights as well.

**AIM subscribes to put fairness and inclusiveness at one par with the Green Deal and the Digital Single Market**

AIM agrees that this is the moment for Europe to present a plan for a recovery that is based on solidarity, cohesion and convergence. The recovery plan is rightly based on three pillars including the deployment of the Green Deal, a deeper and more digital single market while ensuring fairness and inclusiveness.

**Health at the heart of a social Europe**

In its memorandum for the European elections 2019, AIM has called for putting health at the heart of a Social Europe. Health protection FOR ALL must be a cornerstone of our European values. We agree with the European Commission that a strong social economy can offer unique opportunities to help the most vulnerable to return to the labour market. Mutuals, as part of the Social Economy, are enterprises in economic terms, they create employment and social values and have proven to be resilient in crises. We therefore urge the Commission to give them legal recognition at European level to have cohesion, solidarity and convergence both for mutuals and all social economy enterprises. AIM is already committed to answer the public consultation on strengthening a Social Europe and looks forward to cooperate with the European Commission to shape the EU social economy action plan. When rebuilding the economy, the health and wellbeing of all people should and will be the driver for European

cooperation. We acclaim that the European Commission is ready to strengthen the role of EU health agencies.

AIM completely agrees with the Commission's intention to consider vaccines and state-of-the-art treatments as a common good. We would go even further and reiterate our [call for fair prices for medicines](#). Moreover, AIM members welcome the pharmaceutical strategy to support the building of additional pharmaceutical manufacturing and production capacities in Europe.

### **AIM calls for a paradigm shift: Put social considerations on top of the agenda**

9,4 Billion Euros for a standalone Health4Europe Programme seem to be a large amount. Yet, compared to other investments announced by the European Commission today, it seems to be lagging behind. AIM reiterates that the social, health and environmental dimensions must really be at the top of the European agenda and underpin all policy decisions. Indeed, sustainable responses based on the reinforcement of social and health systems must be supported: while the first priority is to contain the pandemic, a true paradigm shift is needed in the second phase. We consider that this recovery plan has the potential to be that shift.

### **A digital Europe needs to serve European citizens first**

The pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation of health care systems in many Member States. AIM is in favour of a digital Europe that serves citizens and considers ethical questions. A digital Europe should be transparent in order to allow a cautious use of health data while unleashing its full potential. AIM members agree on the European Commission's proposal to establish a European Health Data Space to promote health-data exchange and support research in full respect of data protection. AIM is actively contributing to the European Commission's work on AI and the Health Data Space through participating in the ehealth stakeholder group and in a workshop of the AI High Level Group. AIM is keen to continue this cooperation in the future.

### **A new growth agenda can only be green**

The Green Deal as a whole has a clear potential in reaching more sustainable societies and healthier citizens and planet. AIM is pleased to see the European Commission reiterate that the Deal remains at the core of its ambitions and put the necessary instruments at the service of its implementation. The Deal truly embraces a health in all policies perspective and seeks to reconcile economy, society and natural environment.

### **Europe has a role to play to support partners in other parts of the world**

European solidarity must also be offered to help mitigate the crisis in other parts of the world. Countries' social protection systems are very diverse and present different strengths and weaknesses. Exchanging best practices across regions is key to develop mechanisms to properly address the socio-economic impact of the crisis. We must ensure no one is left behind around the world. AIM is an international organisation, with members in Latin America and Africa. We are therefore particularly sensitive to the fact that the recovery plan contains a call to better support global partners. We are looking forward to learning more on how this humanitarian aid instrument will be strengthened.

## AIM is ready to be a partner of the European Commission in building strong health systems across the world

Health insurance funds and health mutuals have a long-standing experience in building strong, solidarity based and democratic health systems. AIM recalls that all stakeholders need to be involved in rebuilding Europe, including representatives of the social economy. We support Europe's ambition for a strong social economy. AIM and its members stand ready to provide input and to support the European institutions both in understanding the impact of the pandemic and in the successful implementation of their ambitious work programme.



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The International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM) is an international umbrella organisation of



**AIM**

Healthcare and  
social benefits  
for all

federations of health mutuals and other not-for-profit healthcare payers. It has 57 members from 30 countries in Europe, Latin America and Africa and the Middle East. 33 of its members, from 20 countries, are based in the European Union. AIM members provide compulsory and/or supplementary health coverage to around 240 million people

around the world, including close to 200 million people in Europe, on a not-for-profit basis. Some AIM members also manage health and social services. Collectively, they have a turnover of almost €300 billion.

AIM members are either mutual or health insurance fund.

They are: private or public legal entities; solidarity based; not-for-profit oriented organisations: surpluses are used to benefit the members; democratically-elected members play a role in the governance of the organisation.

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