

AIM welcomes the EU Green Paper on Healthy Ageing

Big challenges call for bold action and solidarity

AIM welcomes the EU Green Paper on Healthy Ageing. AIM agrees that healthy ageing can only be achieved through actions across the lifespan and generations. AIM believes that the document published is comprehensive and contains most of the biggest challenges to be tackled related to the demographic change, which AIM also highlighted in its [recommendations](#).

AIM will contribute to the debate and answer the launched public consultation. We raise the following key aspects after a first read of the document:

Mutuals recognised as key actors in the delivery of health and long-term care services

AIM thanks and particularly welcomes that the Green Paper recognises the important role social economy actors such as mutuals can play in implementing efficient services.

The model of healthcare mutuals, based on solidarity and limited profitability is indeed key to the achievement of sustainable and inclusive long term care systems. AIM is convinced that is a best practice model. Mutuals make no risk selection. They reinvest any benefit for the improvement of services and at the service of their members. They do not exclude anyone from coverage and enable all their members to access the same services. They also empower them by including them in their governance, a key aspect in achieving Social Development Goal 16: stronger, more efficient and fairer institutions

Healthy ageing as a foundation

AIM welcomes that healthy ageing is mentioned as a foundation in the Green Paper. As stated by the European Commission (EC), promoting health from early on and laying the right foundation is key in “preventing, limiting and postponing some of the challenges linked to ageing”.

European citizens are living longer but not necessarily in better health. “Adding life to years” is the overarching priority of the WHO decade on healthy ageing and is also the overarching goal of the Green Paper on Healthy Ageing. Preventing or slowing down physical decline is a first step in achieving it. This is only possible with a proper emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention throughout the life course.



AIM Healthcare and
social benefits
for all

The impact of the pandemic should be reflected in the policy responses

The COVID19 pandemic has an enormous impact on our societies. Beyond the consequences it has for older people and their rights, as well as for long-term care services, the pandemic also has deep repercussions when it comes to access to preventive care and the overall lifestyles (more sedentary). The expected impact on non-communicable diseases and on mental health of populations should not be overlooked. The rise in unemployment and the economic crisis derived from the pandemic also puts an extra pressure on the European contributory welfare systems and their sustainability.

AIM invites the European Commission to take the above mentioned impact into account and aim at mitigating it by taking bold measures.

Beware of the “marketization” of Health and Long-Term Care

AIM calls on the European Commission to take the dangers of marketization into account and to promote social economy models, with people and their well-being as their core priority.

The Green Paper mentions the silver economy as an opportunity and further describes “(...) market of products and services for healthy and active ageing which could improve the efficiency of health and social care systems, potentially making them more sustainable”. (p.8)

AIM agrees that the silver economy is an opportunity. Yet, when it comes to services devoted to health and well-being of individuals, limited profit or no profit at all should be the rule. If profit is made, it should be reinvested for the benefit of individuals. Recently, the development of market-based approaches to LTC delivery combined to the will to further empower users have led to the development of a strong consumerism focus to the detriment of human interaction in LTC. Private for-profit providers are increasingly contracted to deliver public services, replacing a more trust-based system. Such a trend could exacerbate inequities, leaving the most vulnerable groups with unmet needs due to a lack of affordability and the potential implementation of systems which rely on risk selection.

Big challenges require bold action and solidarity

The challenges related to ageing populations are significant for European societies. They will require to reorganise them in order to favour more intergenerational cohesion, to reform our care systems and delivery models. Social protection systems have to be rethought in order to make them fit for changing labour realities and for an ageing population. Those changes will not happen unless they are carried by a strong political will and bold action at all levels and by all stakeholders.

Presenting a green paper on ‘Healthy Ageing’ shows that the European Commission will lead by example. AIM invites the Commission to propose actions which are bold enough to achieve the necessary transformations in our systems and societies, promote solidarity at all levels while leaving no one behind and inspiring Member States to take action.