Crucial years for solidarity and health: From evidence to action!

In Europe, people have usually access to high quality health care. That seems obvious, but it may not be in the near future. Solidarity based not for profit health care systems face multiple threats:

The Russian invasion in the Ukraine comes hard on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health. Our societies are ageing, there is scarcity of personnel and sharply rising costs of new health technologies and medicines. Access to and affordability of health care is in jeopardy. Inequalities in health are on the rise. They are not only about differences in the status of people's health but also about differences in the care received and opportunities for leading a healthy life.[1] Social and health policy are priorities within all European member states and at the EU level through the European Pillar of Social Rights[2]. Its implementation is a top priority. Solidarity within healthcare needs to be promoted and secured for the generations to come.

AIM members call on the candidates for the 2024 European elections to build on solidarity and the lessons learned from COVID-19. We need a European Union of future- fit, resilient and sustainable social security and health care systems ensuring accessibility and affordability of care for all:

1 Promotion of solidarity based and not-for-profit health systems

Barriers in access to healthcare arose in almost all European countries during the pandemic. COVID-19 disrupted health care for people and hit disproportionately vulnerable populations.[3]

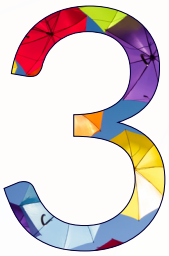
- Introduce **health equity impact assessments** when it comes to EU policymaking to counterbalance better economic issues with social/health concerns;
- Support Member States to make the necessary adjustments of health care system reforms within the **European Semester** and offer more guidance for the implementation of the principles of the **European Pillar of Social Rights**;
- Stress the role of mutuals as social and solidarity economy actors as pointed out in the European SEE action plan[4] as well as in the UN resolution.[5] Their legal recognition is a must[5]. **Solidarity based not-for-profit health systems** avoid health inequalities. Increased not-for-profit health insurance coverage generally leads to better access to health care improving financial protection and overall health.

2 Fair medicine prices

There is unequal access to medicines across the EU especially for "small" markets that have long been underserved. Ever increasing pharmaceutical expenses put national health budgets under pressure. Innovative medicines won't be available for most people. The supply and shortages of medicines are further worsened by the COVID-19 crisis.[6]

- Guarantee a fair and **balanced representation of interests** in the discussion and adoption of the newly proposed pharmaceutical framework;
- Ensure **fair pricing of medicines and transparency on underlying costs**, while allowing for a sufficient profit to keep a steady flow of innovation in Europe and the production of medicines needed by the patients. AIM has developed a **Fair Pricing Calculator** that we offer for use to those engaged in price negotiations;
- Address **shortages of medicines and medical devices** through the proposed pharmaceutical strategy.

Use of digital health focused on patient centeredness to improve healthcare outcome



Digital transformation can improve patient experience, better health outcomes, lower costs and can help to overcome staff shortage. Privacy and security concerns remain a challenge. Digital tools must be available for all while health literacy and digital skills must be ensured.



- **Citizens and patients** must be put **in the center** in the ongoing digitization of health care;
- **More time** for Member States to properly implement the regulation and to support them through financing programmes. The implementation of the **European Health Data Space** will entail costs and have implications on civil society;
- Invest in programmes/joint actions to promote the equal development of a basic understanding of **digital health/data literacy and skills** (e-health, m-health literacy) to empower the citizen and the citizen's knowledge on their health data.

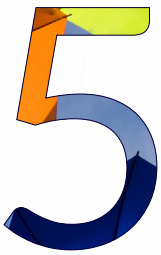


Health in all policies

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are the 1st cause of health and disability worldwide.[7] An estimated 80% are preventable by addressing risk factors such as unhealthy lifestyles and environmental hazards. Mental Health has been severely impacted by a series of crisis.[8]



- Ensure implementation of the **EU's Beating Cancer Plan** and the **EU NCD initiative**, including adopting stricter rules to regulate the commercial determinants of health and the Framework for Sustainable Food Systems.
- Implement a comprehensive, multi-sectoral **Mental Health Strategy**, based on a psychosocial and human rights approach, and a proper allocation of EU funds to support it.
- Deliver on the **EU Green Deal** and ensure a **climate-neutral Europe by 2040**.



International cooperation to achieve Universal Healthcare Coverage (UHC)

While most countries recognise UHC as a goal, concrete operational steps are missing and public financing for health is inadequate, which sets UHC targets for 2030 further off track.[9]



- Ensure that the implementation of the **EU Global Health Strategy** contributes to the achievement of UHC and of stronger and more resilient health systems in other regions;
- Further involve actors of the social economy, especially mutuals, in global health strategies, and fulfil the **UHC2030 agenda**;
- Commit to strengthen the **budgets** allocated to international cooperation, initiated and implemented by civil society, in international partnerships and development cooperation.

AIM Healthcare and social benefits for all

AIM is the umbrella organisation of health mutuals and health insurance funds in Europe and in the world. Through its 50 members from 26 countries, AIM provides health coverage to 240 million people in the world and 209 million in Europe through compulsory and/or complementary health insurance and managing health and social facilities. AIM strives to defend the access to healthcare for all through solidarity-based and non-for profit health insurance. Its mission is to provide a platform for members to exchange on common issues and to represent their interests and values in the European and international Institutions.