

LYON CONSOLIDATED DECLARATION FOR EUROPEAN HEALTH UNION

“TAKE GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES - THINK HEALTH GLOBALLY - ACT LOCALLY”

February 8th Lyon - France

The Lyon Declaration for European Health Union occurs on the occasion of the European Ministers of Health and Foreign Affairs meeting in Lyon on February 9th, the meeting of European Health Ministers in Grenoble on February 10th and the virtual meeting of the European city mayors.

*This European Civil Society Joint Initiative for Health aims to bring together voices and perspectives from a range of professional organisations across Europe. The “One Sustainable Health Forum” from Lyon (France), has thus consolidated the corresponding key recommendations from several civil society representatives in Europe.**

ESSENTIALS

1. TAKE LONG-TERM COMMITMENT NOW FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

During the pandemic, health has taken centre stage. Now is the time to preserve this momentum and ensure that health remains at the core of all policies with a new focus, not on the here and now, but on the challenges ahead. With the One Health concept at the core, it is essential to ensure that the ambitions for EU’s digital and green transformations converge on health: digital transition is very much about access to and exchange of health data and green transition is very much about mitigating the health impact of climate changes. Health is also the key entry point to the 17 Sustainable development goals. A long-term commitment implies building more resilient societies and cross-country cooperation for pandemic preparedness¹ and response, recognising that human, animal, plant, and environmental health are interdependent. A long term-commitment also implies bolstering research and measures to combat antimicrobial resistance, and to address the unmet needs of non-communicable and rare diseases, with due focus on the increasing burden of mental health.

2. THINK & ACT "GLOCALLY"

The European Commission (EC) is to be commended for putting global cooperation and multilateralism on the agenda² at a time when increased protectionism and distrust compromise global cooperation in health and other fields. Health policies must be evidence-driven, coordinated, and aligned across cities, regions, Europe, and globally. In the face of the interlinked global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and inequities the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of transparent communication, rapid and effective sharing of knowledge and ideas - both the weakness and strength of the global response. It is essential that academic channels be kept open, even when commercial and diplomatic channels are subjected to geopolitical stress³.

3. TOGETHER IN EQUITY AND SOLIDARITY

The pandemic has revealed and exacerbated unacceptable inequities in health between rich and poor, between regions and continents and even within individual cities and countries. It is essential to support participatory, sustainable, and equitable health approaches, since pandemic prevention, preparedness and response is only possible in solidarity with the most vulnerable (considering poverty, gen-

* *The Lancet One Health Commission; The Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development; European Global Health Research Institutes Network (EGRIN); The Horizon 2020 Scientific Panel for Health; M8 Alliance; The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies; The European Health Union initiative facilitated by the European Health Forum Gastein (Manifesto for a European Health Union); The World Health Summit; Philea (EU network of foundations); Global Health Advocates; Santé Mondiale 2030; EURORDIS; BioMed Alliance etc.*

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der, age, minorities, Indigenous peoples, migrants, and those with underlying chronic health conditions)⁴. The technological and digital divide must be bridged. High-quality and well-funded research is required to treat and prevent emerging infectious and neglected tropical diseases⁵. The EU should take the lead in such an effort and also continue to strive for Universal Health Coverage. It is essential to adopt an EU-common position on the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) intellectual property rights negotiations to favour investment in vaccine and medicine production facilities on all continents.

4. LIMIT SILOS TO ENHANCE INTER-SECTORAL COOPERATION

The pandemic has painfully shown how socio-economic, political, environmental, agricultural, scientific, technological, and commercial sectors are intimately intertwined and dynamically connected to health. An inter-sectoral and sustainable approach requires multilevel governance (community, regional, national and global) where authority can be elastically ceded from one level to another depending on the nature and seriousness of the crisis at hand. A convergence on health recognises the need for systems thinking and trans-sectoral action⁶. A trans-sectoral stakeholder platform is needed to holistically address and realise the co-benefits of strengthening human physical and mental health while recovering and conserving biodiversity and mitigating climate change. The Health Emergency preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) could potentially take on this role on an EU level. Additionally, the Global Health Policy Forum could be revived.

5. GOVERNANCE FOR EUROPEAN HEALTH UNION

It is proposed that the EU take a global leadership role in driving One Health and supporting sustainable health research and practice, which requires strong partnerships between public and private actors. EU’s global health policy strategy should be adapted and strengthened⁷ to better align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), while also rethinking international cooperation⁸. The updated strategy should enable an integrated and complementary decision process by member states and multilateral organisations like the World Health Organization (WHO). The creation of a European Council for Health Research (Eu-CHR) as a coordination body should be considered. There is the need for an overarching One Health governance in Europe. It means that Health has to be included in the Green Deal and the European Digital Transition. A post-Covid Europe must be focused on health for all and must speak with one voice on Global governance for health.

References

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PREAMBLE

The pandemic has painfully shown how social, economic, environmental, agricultural, political, scientific, technological, and commercial sectors are closely and dynamically connected to health, **underlining the need to integrate the One Health approach across all sectors and policies**. The value of individual and societal health is widely supported, and care for our planet earth is a top priority for European citizens.

1. It is acknowledged that major efforts have been made by member states, the European Parliament and the European Commission to improve collaboration across borders and national interests, however, under the spotlight of COVID-19, European Union (EU) health policy weaknesses have been unveiled. **This crisis has been a wake-up call and both immediate and long-term strategic action is needed.**

2. **European policies are fragmented due to lack of continuity and coordination, within the EU and between the EU and its member states.** This threatens health research, health care, prevention, crisis responsiveness, and EU health innovation competitiveness. Siloed programs have created boundaries between basic research and innovation, obstructing implementation in treatment, diagnosis, and prevention, evaluating cost-effectiveness, and ensuring an affordable health care system across Europe. Today 54% of cross-border donations by public benefit foundations in Europe are directed to health. We call on the EU to remove barriers for cross-border donations to unlock the full potential of philanthropy effectively addressing a health crisis which does not stop at country borders.

3. Although the new initiatives of the European Commission under EU4Health, Horizon Europe and the European Health Emergency preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) are encouraging steps towards **better alignment and communication across European Commission directorates and with member states**, they need to be taken further. The new EU policies under discussion should look beyond crisis management and threats of infectious diseases. An increase in funding within a fragmented system is not effective. **A coordinated approach, based on an ambitious vision, a comprehensive strategy and identifiable leadership, inspired by learnings from the pandemic, integrating the different facets of health is urgently required.**

4. **“One Health”** is based on the premise that, beyond targeted responses to individual health challenges, a holistic approach is needed to address these global issues. This encompasses human health, but also animal and environmental health, while considering the pressures from collective human behaviors and practices including, amongst others, pollution, global warming, deforestation, wildlife trade. It intends to put forward three complementary dimensions convincingly, across regions, regardless of wealth, specific interests, and cross-cultural disparities:

- a) **put health at the core of the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** (see the figure at the end of the document) through its key role at many of the nexuses of problems to promote concrete changes that support a sustainable future.
- b) to facilitate convergence between the various preexisting approaches that **take into account the continuum between ecosystems, animal and human health, and societies as a whole.**
- c) **to facilitate dialogue between public and private actors**, academia, civil society, politics, and private sector in order to translate “One Sustainable Health” into practical and feasible programs, interventions, and policies to the **one overarching and humanistic common goal: Good Health and Wellbeing for All!**

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CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Health is at the crossroads of many issues and must be seen as a top EU priority. Investing in health and sustainable development is key for the safety and wellbeing of EU citizens. We call upon the EU ministers who met on February 9th, 2022, in Lyon-France **to take global responsibility and make health a central priority for future EU actions. Think health globally!**

A- CARING FOR PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

GOVERNANCE

1. Affirm the European Union's (EU) explicit competence to take global responsibilities and action on health policy.
2. Develop strong health innovation systems that can mitigate the weaknesses that left so many people vulnerable.
3. Strengthen coordinating mechanisms with solidarity principles between members states.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

4. Drive forward a global Framework Convention/Treaty for Pandemic Preparedness and Response.
5. Optimise investment in prevention of health threats, preparedness, and response, especially in the European Health Emergency preparedness and Response Authority (HERA).
6. Develop more robust country-reporting mechanisms that consider the One Health concept.

ONE HEALTH

1. Develop a One Health framework that, amongst others supports investments into green infrastructure, limits endocrine disruptors in the environment, improves access to non-toxic consumables and high-quality nutrition.
2. Promote One Sustainable Health to align the One Health concept with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG's).
3. Implement widespread joint external evaluations based on a One Health approach aligned with SDG's.
4. EU policies on stopping global and imported deforestation need to be strengthened and legislation that recognises and gives legal personality to the ecosystem services and foundational health benefits of the environment must be explored.

MANUFACTURING AND LOGISTICS

5. Strengthen the EU's role in the regulation and distribution of medical and pharmaceutical products to ensure that such products are readily available to all member states.
6. Improve global supply chains, production capacity, and stockpiling with specific mechanisms to procure adequate supplies in emergencies.
7. Sustain investment in infrastructure and in the workforce to ensure that health services become more resilient in the face of changing health needs and future threats.

B- EUROPE EMBRACING GLOBAL HEALTH RESPONSIBILITIES

GOVERNANCE

1. Define an EU Global Health Strategy and action plan aligned with the SDGs.
2. Prioritise measures to link Global Health with the One Sustainable Health approach.
3. Invest in strong, resilient, and inclusive health systems with appropriate workforce guaranteeing universal health coverage and reducing out-of-pocket payments below 15% of total health expenditures in all EU countries.

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4. Improve coordination of international funding for core capacities and global actions to support investment in health.
5. Propose a new policy framework across sectors, across countries, in contribution to the SDGs for mutually beneficial innovative R&D.
6. Adopt a common EU position regarding the ongoing World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations about IP rights to remove all existing barriers to the universal and fair access to medical products in the context of a global health common threat.

CLIMATE – BIODIVERSITY - HEALTH NEXUS

7. Link healthcare performance to SDGs and strengthen the EU’s role in fighting climate change also in view of the many co-benefits for health.
8. Reinforce the Water-Energy-Food-Health Nexus and the Climate-Biodiversity-Health Nexus as an integral part of the G7 and G20 agenda.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

9. Re-frame health as a central area of EU-African Union partnership and establish a Team Europe Initiative (TEI) to strengthen health systems and health research in Africa.
10. Enhance EU and its member states contribution to the global efforts to tackle global health threats (Covid pandemic - ACT-A; Global Fund, GAVI, etc.).
11. Support capacity bridging and reinforce on-site training of human resources in the One Sustainable Health approach in developing countries.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

12. Facilitate sharing of pathogens, biological samples, genomic data, and development of timely medical solutions.
13. Increase laboratory and surveillance capacity to identify animal diseases and emerging pathogens in all countries.

INEQUITIES

14. Promote women's health, maternal and child health, and gender equality
15. Promote Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and equal access to medicines, within and between communities, regions, and cultures across the globe, “leaving no one behind”.

C- EMPOWERING WAYS TO BUILD EUROPEAN HEALTH UNION

GOVERNANCE

1. Improve communication and information by public authorities to citizens & vice versa.
2. Develop health democracy with balanced governance between society and political decision-makers, guided by scientific evidence and leadership for better understanding and trust.
3. Encourage and operationalise the One Sustainable Health approach at all levels within the European Commission that assimilates the silos while promoting more transversal integration.
4. Evolve HERA into a multistakeholder platform.
5. Establish a European Health Insurance Fund to cover rare diseases.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

6. Build a European industrial base for vaccines, medicines, diagnostics, and other strategic health products.
7. Establish a Pan-European Network for Disease Control and a Pan-European Health Threats Council.
8. Develop digital health capacity and data management in respect of the EU Charter of Human Right.

DIGITALISATION AND DATA

9. Define common minimum standards for interoperability of data systems (e.g., European Health Data Hub) that could be used for rapid sharing and publication of harmonised health data.

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10. Harmonise vaccination protocols and official / legal certification.
11. Develop robust national surveillance and country-reporting mechanisms that take into account the One Health concept.
12. Counter the threat of “fake news” by furthering transdisciplinary research and communication mechanisms for rapid generation, translation, and sharing of accurate and trusted science-based evidence from research to implementation.
13. Strengthen cooperation between the EU and Africa on digital health to promote mutual learnings, stimulate the development of innovation, and enable co-investments. A strong cooperation between CDC Europe and CDC Africa can advance the agenda in data sharing agreements and improve cross-border disease surveillance.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

14. Address the unequal distribution human resources in health in Europe, providing support to regions that have difficulties in attracting health professionals.
15. Promote training and education of health professionals to common standards and foster learning health systems.
16. Implement measures to safeguard the rights of health professionals, including those from other parts of the world.

RESEARCH

17. Develop a globally coordinated approach to discovering, developing, and delivering effective and safe medical solutions.
18. Ramp up the European Reference Networks (ERN) for Rare Diseases and extend their model to other complex diseases.
19. Set out a comprehensive strategy for health research with a structure that creates synergies between existing structures and performance: addressing fragmentation, providing continuity, supported by society, and with strong visionary leadership.
20. The creation of a European Council for Health Research (Eu-COHR) as a coordination body, will be an important and crucial step to implement the **LYON CONSOLIDATED DECLARATION FOR EUROPEAN HEALTH UNION** and to overcome siloes and fragmentation in the health sector.



Main documents and reports used for the consolidated recommendations:

- 1- “Manifesto for a European Health Union” - by the European Health Union Initiative, facilitated by the European Health Forum Gastein (2020) <https://europeanhealthunion.eu/>
- 2- “Drawing light from the pandemic, a new strategy for health and sustainable development” – by the European Observatory for Health
- 3- “The European Union and the negotiation of the international pandemic treaty: interests at stake and potential contribution” - Elisabet Ruiz Cairó - GLOBAL HEALTH CENTRE POLICY BRIEF I 2022
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