

Joint Statement

Investing in Health for Europe's Competitiveness, Resilience and Long-Term Growth

The European cardiovascular and cancer communities call on EU policymakers to ensure that health remains a clearly identifiable and sufficiently resourced priority within the future European Competitiveness Fund and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

Together, cardiovascular disease and cancer account for nearly 3 million deaths each year in the European Union and are estimated to cost the EU close to €500 billion annually. Beyond their human impact, these conditions generate substantial avoidable healthcare expenditure, productivity loss, and social security costs, affecting workforce participation, innovation capacity, and public finances across Member States.

Chronic diseases require coordinated European action. EU flagship initiatives such as the EU Safe Hearts Plan and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan reflect this growing recognition and provide a strong framework for improving prevention, care, and health system resilience.

The European Competitiveness Fund will be a central instrument in shaping Europe's industrial capacity and strategic autonomy, supporting sustainable growth and long-term value creation. In this context, cardiovascular and cancer prevention and care are not only public health priorities but also key enablers of Europe's competitiveness, productivity, and social sustainability.

Investment in health delivers dual returns: improved population health and stronger economic performance. A healthier population translates into higher labour market participation, more productive working lives, and reduced pressure on health and social care systems. The EU4Health programme has demonstrated the value of a dedicated EU health instrument in strengthening prevention, cooperation, and preparedness—an approach that must be preserved.

As discussions on the future EU budget progress, we call on policymakers to:

- **Ensure** health remains a standalone priority with strong, ringfenced and dedicated funding
- **Safeguard** the visibility, predictability and scale of EU investment in health within the European Competitiveness Fund
- **Support** implementation of both the EU Safe Hearts Plan and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan through the full period of the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-34
- **Recognise** health as a strategic driver of competitiveness, particularly in life sciences, medical technologies, and digital health
- **Strengthen** the resilience and crisis preparedness of health systems in the face of geopolitical challenges and future shocks

We stand ready to work with EU institutions and Member States to ensure that Europe's competitiveness agenda fully reflects the strategic importance of investing in health.

Funding health is not a cost — it is a strategic investment in Europe's future.

As the European Parliament lead committee on the Report on the Regulation establishing the European Competitiveness Fund, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) holds a decisive responsibility in safeguarding Europe's progress, ambition, and global leadership in the fight against cancer.

Against this backdrop, and with the deadline to table amendments set for 6 May, the EU's cancer and cardiovascular communities urge all members of the ITRE Committee to table targeted amendments, prioritising the following statement:

'The EU4Health programme has demonstrated its value as a transformative instrument for strengthening public health systems and securing the Union's strategic autonomy. Recognising that a healthy population and a resilient workforce are fundamental to European competitiveness, health must remain a standalone programme with strong levels of dedicated funding to implement the EU Safe Hearts Plan and sustain the progress of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.'

AMENDMENT:

| Heading 2: Competitiveness, Prosperity, and Security | |
|--|---|
| Original Structure | Proposed revised Structure |
| 04 — Competitiveness Fund | 04 — Competitiveness Fund |
| 04 02 — European Competitiveness Fund 04 02 01 — Clean transition and decarbonisation 04 02 02 — Health and bioeconomy 04 02 03 — Digital leadership 04 02 04 — Resilience, Defence Industry and Space 04 02 05 — Competitiveness Hub and Cross-cutting Competitiveness Actions 04 02 06 — Contribution to ECF InvestEU Instrument | 04 02 — European Competitiveness Fund 04 02 01 — Clean transition and decarbonisation 04 02 02 — Health and bioeconomy 04 02 02 (new) – Health 04 02 03 (new) – Bioeconomy 04 02 03 — Digital leadership 04 02 04 — Resilience, Defence Industry and Space 04 02 05 — Competitiveness Hub and Cross-cutting Competitiveness Actions 04 02 06 — Contribution to ECF InvestEU Instrument |

We also call on all partners, stakeholders and broader cardiovascular and cancer communities to actively approach Members of the European Parliament and urge them to reflect these priorities in their draft reports.