

**Subject: Future EU Health Programme urgently needs financial support**

Dear Commissioner Andriukaitis,

EU health policy has led to **impressive achievements** related to disease prevention and health promotion and continues to contribute to more innovative, efficient and sustainable healthcare systems. Member States in effect are now better equipped to coordinate health emergencies and have also improved their cooperation in relation to drug pricing and ehealth services. Thanks to EU legislation, consumers benefit from stronger market surveillance of their medicines and medical devices and through EU funding, rare diseases patients can rely on the European Reference Network for improving the research of orphan drugs.

These achievements were made possible through ambitious political *and* financial commitments to protect the health of Europeans. As the European Commission is preparing to propose the next Multiannual Financial Framework, there has never been a stronger case, or a more vital moment for the EU to step up work to protect the health of its consumers. On behalf of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation, I therefore urge you to ensure that sufficient resources are also available in future for the EU Health Programme.

While the achievements of our health policy show how the EU can benefit all consumers, **big challenges lie ahead**: the ageing population, technological advances, increased consumers expectations and new health threats present major challenges for the sustainability of national health care systems and the essential services they provide.

**An ambitious EU health policy will be crucial** to address these challenges and meet the expectations of European citizens who, according to a 2017 Eurobarometer survey, mention health among their most important concerns. The same survey also showed that **70% of Europeans want the EU to do more for health. A future Health Programme is the obvious vehicle** through which the EU can meet these expectations and demonstrate to its citizens that it provides the overall population with tangible benefits.

Beyond the areas covered by the current Health Programme, **new tools will be necessary** to improve, for example, the cooperation among Member States to prevent shortages of medicines. New mechanisms should also be developed to address the lack of appropriate vaccines and antibiotics for human health. This should include large EU campaigns designed and developed to create awareness among European consumers.

A future Health Program needs to continue to support the work carried out at national level. Consumers organizations, through their campaign, magazines and evaluations are part of this joint effort, and benefit from a Health Programme that supports their work on cross-border health care issues and practical problems that matter for all European consumers.

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**Without a dedicated EU health programme,** some of the EU's landmark achievements could however be lost and it would be unable to deliver the results its citizens need and expect. An ambitious health policy underpinned by sufficient resources would reassure European consumers that the EU acts to protect their health.

Should you be interested and available, we would be happy to discuss further with you our proposals for a future EU Health Programme and its funding.

Please note that we have shared this letter also with Commissioner Günther Oettinger and Secretary General of the European Commission, Martin Selmayr.

Yours sincerely,

Monique Goyens  
Director General