

Joint Statement: Healthcare Stakeholders' Priority Areas and Recommendations on the Future Framework Programme 10

FP10 and EU collaborative research frameworks are an **opportunity to strengthen the European research ecosystem, boost European research and innovation in health**, and reinforce Europe's global leadership. Addressing tomorrow's health challenges requires **innovative solutions, dedicated and better optimised funds, and multi-stakeholder collaboration** across patient organisations, healthcare professionals and care teams, governments and responsible authorities, academia, industry, and broader civil society.

No one group can do it alone.

The opportunity to strengthen Europe's leadership comes at a time of growing challenges in health. The geopolitical landscape is rapidly evolving, impacting multilateral institutions involved in global health, while at the same time, governments have shifted focus away from public health as a central priority. Within Europe, **health systems are increasingly under strain** from an ageing population, an increase in non-communicable diseases, healthcare professional and workforce shortages, medical products and funding shortages – while future global health crises, including climate and security related crises, remain an ever-present threat.

Health cannot be an afterthought in planning for future health crises and global challenges.

At this critical juncture, Europe has the **opportunity to reinforce its global standing in world-class and patient-centric healthcare research and innovation**, while meeting the evolving care needs, and bolstering and expanding European leadership in health systems innovation.

Ensuring strong research and innovation in health is essential to address Europe's evolving healthcare challenges – Robust R&I also underpins **Europe's global leadership** in health, supporting and investing in scientific expertise, infrastructure, and collaborative networks, developing breakthrough treatments and technologies, pioneering public health initiatives, and **setting global standards for healthcare.**

The European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights is the most advanced in the world. Upholding these values requires enormous efforts and unprecedented resources, to keep conducting the highest-quality research that respects the highest human rights standards.

Priority areas for the Framework Programme 10

Effectively funding health research and innovation should remain a key focus within the next Framework Programme.

- Europe's continued leadership in health research and innovation depends on **preserving its world-class research ecosystem.** This includes both greater investment and more wisely optimised existing funding, as well as the need to **ring-fence funds** to ensure the necessary resources are available when needed.
- Effectively funding R&I in health is crucial for equipping European health systems to **tackle public health emergencies** such as future pandemics and the growing threat of AMR, and increasing the resilience of health systems towards climate-related risks.
- Such funding can also address **longer-term challenges** faced by health systems, such as the risk of rise of non-communicable diseases, **supporting research and driving innovation in priority conditions such as cancer as well as addressing unmet needs**, and alleviate strains on the health and care workforce including staff shortages. For example, advancing multidisciplinary research on automation and digitalisation technologies that includes patients and healthcare professional perspectives can reduce manual processes and increase operational efficiency.
- In addition to the benefits of addressing Europe's short and long-term health challenges, more effective funding in health R&I can create **broader societal impact through more direct and strategic efforts**– ranging from ensuring patients are equal partners in research, to advancing the green transition, strengthening resilience, and equipping Europe to compete internationally through a robust and attractive R&I ecosystem.

- The next Framework Programme should support R&I research to bridge gaps in the field of innovative science and technologies for global health, to support health system resilience.

Public-private collaboration in R&I – such as Public Private Partnerships like the Innovative Health Initiative (IHI) and its predecessors (IMI1, IMI2), as well as other partnerships in health (GH EDCTP3, or THCS and others) – have proven successful and should continue, with dedicated support for public partners, as well as SMEs and start-ups.

- Collaborations between public partners including patients and patient organisations, researchers, healthcare providers and industry play an essential role in meaningfully advancing healthcare, by ensuring all stakeholders contributions are integrated and implemented in research.
- By keeping R&I in Europe, we enable a facilitated uptake of research results, and at the same time, retain talent, prevent brain drain and avoid paying twice—once for education and again to regain lost expertise of clinical researchers.
- FP10 should continue to **facilitate and strengthen the European research and innovation ecosystem**, including fostering cooperation between civil society and patient organisations, public competent authorities across different levels of governance (European, national, regional and local), healthcare professionals, researchers, large companies and smaller businesses, and **facilitate their participation in public-private research collaboration** projects, as well as attracting investment and collaboration from outside Europe
- Collaborative projects involving public and private partners – including SMEs and start-ups – **continue to deliver impact for European patients and the research and innovation ecosystem**, and bolster European innovation and contribute to enhancing our region's competitiveness.

Improvements in certain aspects of the current Framework Programme can further maximise the benefits and impact for people in Europe.

We advance **6 recommendations** to bolster the effectiveness, reach, and impact of the next Framework Programme for the benefit of the EU's resilience in health and strengthening of the world-class EU (health) research and innovation ecosystem.

1. *Ring-fence health funds for example, by preserving a stand-alone research programme (FP10), and enable more flexible funding rules within the stand-alone programme.*
2. *Lighten the administrative burden for future applicants to streamline engagement in calls for proposal under the future FP10, as well as public-private partnerships (PPPs) and make the processes for calls and topic definition more clear and efficient.*
3. *Achieve an effective balance between basic and applied research to enable meaningful advances in critical areas of healthcare; at the same time, bolster projects focused on implementation to maximise impact for European patients, healthcare professionals, and health systems today.*
4. *Support collaborative research between public and private partners, including by maintaining in-kind contributions from the private sector.*
5. *Improve exchanges between civil society organisations including patient organisations, researchers, healthcare professionals, academia, public competent authorities across different levels of governance (European, national, regional and local), and industry and work towards bridging the science-industry-society gap, including by supporting efforts to address structural challenges to meaningful participation, like funding and capacity building.*
6. *A strong R&I programme will foster excellence and attract and retain talent to bolster the rich European R&I ecosystem.*

Conclusion

FP10 is an opportunity for Europe to continue strengthening its global leadership in health research and innovation, preserving its world-class (health) research ecosystem, boosting its competitiveness and attractiveness, and ultimately meet the needs of European patients and caregivers, healthcare professionals, and health systems.

This can be achieved by ensuring the next Framework Programme (1) maintains health as a priority; (2) safeguards the strong research culture including public-private partnership programmes; and (3) makes improvements based on learnings and good practices in EU Member States in a few key areas.

We look forward to forging ahead with our partners and European institutions to create a dynamic research and innovation ecosystem that will drive impactful results for patients, healthcare professionals, and health systems across Europe in the years to come.