

July 2025

## EHN Statement on the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework: Health is Not a Commodity

The European Heart Network (EHN) expresses serious concern regarding the European Commission's proposal for the **2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**, particularly on the planned integration of the EU4Health programme into the new European Competitiveness Fund (ECF).

**Health is a fundamental human right and shared societal value, not a commodity to be leveraged for economic gain.** EHN recognises the EU's ambition to boost competitiveness and address cross-sectoral fragmentation. However, embedding health within a mega-fund primarily oriented towards industrial acceleration undermines the principles upon which equitable, effective and resilient health systems are built.

The [proposed ECF regulation](#) frames health through a lens of market efficiency, emphasising productivity, innovation pipelines, and pharmaceutical competitiveness. This approach neglects core public health principles, such as universal access, prevention, health equity, and addressing the role of social, and commercial determinants in shaping health outcomes.

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), the leading cause of death in Europe, are responsible for 3.9 million deaths annually and place an estimated €282 billion burden on the EU economy each year. Tackling CVD requires coherent, long-term investment in health promotion, disease prevention, and early detection. **The proposed absorption of EU4Health into an umbrella fund with broader industrial priorities risks diverting essential resources away from these critical public health priorities and undermining the EU's capacity to act decisively on health in general and cardiovascular health in particular.**

EHN echoes the concerns raised by the [European Parliament](#) and civil society organisations regarding the risks of deprioritising well-functioning public health programmes in favour of funding structures driven by return on investment metrics.

### EHN urges EU policymakers to:

- **Ensure health remains a standalone priority** in the EU budget, with a dedicated structure, institutional strategic independence from industrial competitiveness agenda;
- **Reinforce investment in public health and disease prevention**, particularly in areas that carry high socio-economic burden, such as CVD;

- **Re-centre EU health policy on people rather than markets**, by addressing inequalities and acting on social and commercial determinants of health;
- **Preserve and build upon the achievements of EU4Health**, ensuring that proven mechanisms are strengthened, not absorbed into broader frameworks with conflicting objectives.

The EU has a clear mandate under [Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union \(TFEU\)](#) to ensure a high level of human health protection across all its policies. This mandate must be operationalised, not sidelined.

Health should not be treated as a derivative outcome of economic policy, but as a strategic objective in its own right, crucial for social well-being, sustainable development, and economic resilience.

The European Heart Network will continue to work closely with EU policymakers, particularly the **SANT Committee** and the **MEP Cardiovascular Health Group**, as well as through alliances such as the **EU4Health Civil Society Alliance** and the **European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health (EACH)**.

Through our Europe-wide network, we will continue to advocate for **health to remain a central, visible, and well-funded priority** in the next MFF, ensuring that public health infrastructures are adequately supported to deliver lasting benefits for future generations.

### About EHN

The European Heart Network (EHN) is a Brussels-based alliance of foundations and associations working across Europe to prevent cardiovascular diseases (CVD), represent the interests of patients, and support cardiovascular research.

Our vision is that every person in Europe can grow up and live in a sustainable environment that promotes and protects cardiovascular health.

Learn more at [ehnheart.org](https://ehnheart.org)