
EU Health Priorities Debate: Key Outcomes, Insights, and Actionable Ideas for the Future



Overview

Key messages

- Participants across the board recognise the role of the Commission and of DG SANTE in health and see the new European Parliament and Commission as a critical opportunity to encourage the right health priorities. They want the European Commission to play an ongoing and increasing role in public health and in fostering health leadership.
- Long-term issues – including the ageing of the population and climate change – are seen as ‘most’ important by all the various constituencies and are identified as key areas where the Commission should take action.
- The core issues of health security and global health were not prioritised in the same way in any of the strands of debate, yet the issues of security and the EU’s role in the world are repeatedly mentioned in open discussions. This suggests that the actions that the Commission is already taking have created a certain degree of confidence (or complacency) with people assuming work will (and should) continue.
- There is also a clear commitment to the Commission and DG SANTE’s role in stronger cross-sectoral action to promote health with an interest in Health in All Policies and Health for All Policies as tools for addressing determinants of health and calls for coordination across different policy branches of the Commission.
- Topics beyond the framework were raised with a set of common concerns emerging namely: non-communicable diseases (including cancer, cardiovascular diseases), mental health; equity; public health, prevention and health promotion; political determinants of health; and health services and provision to meet patients’ needs.
- There is a strong and shared sense of the kinds of actions the Commission and DG SANTE can take to support health. These show the appreciation for what is already done, and some interest in a stronger EU involvement beyond its current remit.
- The specific actions that the public would like to see vary across groups as do the way the perceived needs and scope for action are expressed. It is clear that there is an appetite for a mix of actions consistent with current practice and potentially expanding beyond it. The report sets out the range and kinds of issues participants want the Commission to tackle across the nine different themes.
- There was some consensus that DG SANTE might usefully expand its role, with two thirds supporting a wider mandate in the stakeholder survey, but also a strong sense that this would take time and energy. Participants broadly share the view that, while it would be good to do more, it is important that time is not lost discussing future options when there is so much that could be addressed at once, under the current mandate.
- Participants advocated for new tools but also urged the better implementation and coordination of existing mechanisms.

[**Download the Whitepaper**](https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/docs/librariesprovider3/studies---external/future-health-priorities-of-the-eu-4th.pdf?sfvrsn=bea0bec1_1&download=true)

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Published on : Thu, 27 Jun 2024