
Toward a Healthier Europe: EU Lawmakers Pledge to Increase Healthcare Access



As the European Union prepares for the upcoming elections, the issue of healthcare takes centre stage in the electoral debate. Two prominent lawmakers, Tomislav Sokol and Tilly Metz, engaged in a thought-provoking discussion presented by MSD, highlighting their visions for a healthier Europe.

Towards Universal Healthcare: Addressing Europe's Healthcare Challenges

One of the primary focuses of the debate was the pledge to level up access to quality healthcare across Europe. Both Sokol and Metz emphasised the importance of universal EU health coverage, alleviating stress on healthcare systems, and attracting healthcare innovation and investment to the continent. With soaring rates of non-communicable diseases, an alarming shortage of healthcare workers, and a rapidly ageing population, the need for comprehensive healthcare reforms is more pressing than ever.

Revitalising European Healthcare with Pharmaceutical Innovation

Sokol, representing the centre-right European People's Party (EPP), stressed the urgency of de-risking medical supply chains and curtailing the backward trend in European health innovation. He advocated for creating frameworks to attract companies to invest in Europe, emphasising the need for incentives to bolster competitiveness in the pharmaceutical industry. Sokol's support for the ongoing overhaul of the EU's pharmaceutical legislation, aimed at striking a balance between industry interests and affordable medicines for Europeans, reflects his commitment to addressing these challenges.

A Call for Transparency and Social Justice

However, Metz, a leading figure in the Greens, offered a different perspective. While acknowledging the importance of incentivising pharmaceutical innovation, she emphasised the need for transparency in public investments and rebalancing power dynamics within the industry. Metz argued for placing the patient and citizen at the centre of healthcare policies, advocating for Europe to prioritise social justice over market competition. The debate also delved into specific healthcare priorities, such as tackling cardiovascular disease and mental health issues. Sokol called for a bespoke EU strategy to combat cardiovascular disease, while both candidates supported preventative measures to address lifestyle factors contributing to its prevalence. Metz highlighted the need for a holistic approach to address factors like air pollution, emphasising the importance of coherent policies to protect public health.

Navigating Political Tides: Healthcare Amidst Rising Euroscepticism

Furthermore, the discussion touched upon the rise of Euroscepticism and its potential impact on healthcare policies. While Sokol expressed confidence in maintaining key health policies despite political shifts, Metz cautioned against the consequences of a more protectionist and less pro-European approach. The debate underscored the importance of preserving a collaborative approach to healthcare reform amidst evolving political landscapes. Anca Toma, Executive Director at the European Patients' Forum, emphasised the significance of working with patients to define healthcare priorities. With improving the quality of healthcare emerging as a key concern among European voters, candidates were urged to prioritise patient-centric policies that address the diverse needs of the population.

The electoral debate presented by MSD provided valuable insights into the visions and priorities of EU lawmakers regarding healthcare. As Europe embarks on a new political mandate, the need for concerted efforts to ensure equitable access to quality healthcare remains paramount. By fostering innovation, transparency, and patient-centric approaches, policymakers can pave the way for a healthier and more resilient Europe.

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