Manifesto Analysis

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)

1. Summary

✖ Lacking

NCDs are left completely unaddressed. The document makes no reference, nor even hints at disease **prevention** nor to **health promotion**. **Mental health** and **antimicrobial resistance** (AMR) are also completely left out from the manifesto. This is also the case for a number of topics such as **research**, **health systems resilience**, **health crisis preparedness**, and **EU commitment to global and multilateral initiatives**. The manifesto also does not refer to key files to be implemented, such as the European Health Data Space, the Green Deal and its Fit for 55 dimension, Farm to Fork, Sustainable Food Systems Framework, the Pharma Package or Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

▬ Insufficient to meet EU goals and commitments

Public health is not placed as a priority in the manifesto, even though some elements would, to a limited extent, contribute to it. The manifesto refers to **institutional elements**, but in a general perspective. **Sustainable food systems** are developed in the document, but solely by focusing on agriculture and environmental sustainability. Elements proposed would contribute to supporting the **health and care workforce**, but the issue is overall insufficiently addressed. **Digital transformation** is well addressed, however, there is insufficient focus on the transformation of the health sector itself. Elements are provided for **health equity**, in terms of LGBTI+ rights and gender equity, but the manifesto fails to address other dimensions of equity. **Access to care** is also very limited. Finally, **environment** and **climate** policies are developed but not sufficiently addressed.

✓ Addressed

None of the analysed topics are listed as sufficiently addressed.

Key proposals: Revision of the mutual recognition of professional qualifications; enshrine LGBTI+ rights in EU legislation; fast-track the Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive; expand the EU Crimes list to include hate speech and hate crime; right to abortion into the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; harmonised definition of rape based on the lack of consent; implementation of EU-wide restraining orders; expand the scope of the European Emissions Trading System (ETS); European strategy for the bioeconomy; EU electricity interconnection target of at least 15% by 2030; a pan-European rail network.
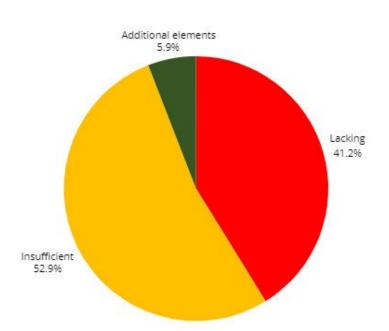
+ Additional relevant elements to public health

The manifesto provides several elements regarding **treaty changes**, even though these do not refer directly to health. One element of environmental policy also provides strong insights that could further support public health, namely, the call for the European Environmental Agency to become a fully operational authority ensuring the implementation of environmental standards.

2. Focus[1]

Assessing content related to health
by number of topics

Additional elements
5.9%

Lacking
41.2%

Insufficient
52.9%

Non-communicable diseases
Mental health
Health crisis preparedness
Antimicrobial resistance
Research in health
Global and multilateral initiatives
Resilience of health systems

Health workforce
Digital transformation
Public health as a priority
Health equity
Access to care
Sustainable food systems
Institutional elements
Environment and health
Climate change adaptation/mitigation

Treaty changes and institutional tools

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[1] Disclaimer: this visual reflects the coverage of the 16 topics listed in the analyses. Some of the topics comprise more elements than others.

european public health alliance

3. Analysis

Public health as a priority

Public health is not highlighted as a priority in the ALDE manifesto. However, a few elements tend to show planned measures that would support public health. The document takes a commitment to "create jobs, maintain our welfare model and uphold our world class schools, daycares and **hospitals**" in the changes necessary to face the EU's current challenges. It also calls for a boost in economic growth to support sustainable technologies development that would allow to "decouple growth from the use of natural resources" which currently present "rising negative climate and health impacts". Some elements are also presented from an equity point of view, particularly on the topic of **sexual and reproductive health and rights**, abortion and gender-based care. It also hints at the **digitalisation of healthcare**, and skills and mobility in the sector. These elements can in a way slightly relate to priority 1 of the Global Health Strategy[2], and somewhat to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3[3], but are not sufficient to meet the EU public health needs in the coming years.

The topic of public health is indeed insufficiently developed in the manifesto. **Health promotion and disease prevention** are not stressed in the document. Even if the manifesto calls for silos to be broken within the European Commission, this does not reflect a vision supporting health in all policies. Finally, there are no calls for a **stronger health budget**. This is only limited a call to spend "all EU policies and economic instruments (…) on and in support of the shift to the sustainable and digital economy". The document also stresses the need to "provide municipalities with more direct access to EU programmes such as the European social funds and open more avenues for direct funding for municipalities, cities, and civil society organisations."

In contrast, the **EPHA manifesto** includes "Keeping health as a top priority on the EU political agenda" and "Providing the means for an ambitious EU health policy", showing the clear need for health to be considered and for the COVID-19 lessons to not be forgotten.

Institutional elements

The ALDE manifesto provides elements regarding the EU institutions, particularly in light of potential **treaty changes and EU enlargement**. The latter is quite well addressed, with several elements supporting the entry of candidate countries fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, and inviting them to take part in the EU elections with an observer role in the institutions. It calls for stronger cooperation with the United Kingdom, and with the European Political Community, as a "alternative to EU membership".

However, these institutional elements do not refer to stronger role of the EU in health. The document does not refer to the **EU Health Union**, nor to **the SANT Committee** in the European Parliament. The manifesto does call for a "breaking down [of] the siloed approach, which leads to overlapping and contradictory legislation", with regards the European Commission. It also calls for the implementation of the "one in, one out" principle in regulations.

The document also provides elements on the strengthening of the **rule of law**, as well as regarding **civil society**. It calls to "uphold the right to association and assembly to protect civil society organisations". It calls for a reform of "the EU treaties to strengthen your active participation and increase transparency and accountability for the EU to meet your needs and key concerns". The document also stresses the need to open consultation processes to foster citizen engagement.

Further elements on treaty changes include a call to strengthen subsidiarity, and to prepare the EU for enlargement. This entails reforming "the EU decision-making procedure to ensure efficiency" due to a larger number of Member States, and reforming the EU budget to "absorb financial consequences of

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[2]   Global Health Strategy - (1) Deliver better health and well-being of people across the life course
[3]   SDG 3: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

enlargement". The manifesto calls for "a single seat for the European Parliament", for the institution to be given the right of initiative on legislation, as well as "power to cast a no-confidence vote against any member of the European Commission". Regarding the elections, ALDE calls for transnational voting lists.

These elements do call for a reform of the treaties and the institutions. However, as there is no mention of health in that regard, it is not fully aligned with the **EPHA manifesto**. Indeed, the EPHA manifesto calls for a stronger Health Union, with a SANT committee in the European Parliament, and a Vice-President of the European Commission that would focus on public health, wellbeing, and social rights. Particularly, strengthening the EU Health Union is key in the post-pandemic recovery, would support the continuation of the efforts put in place since 2020, and answer the needs to address other public health issues with a stronger European role.

Sustainable food systems

The ALDE manifesto mentions **food systems,** but this remains limited to agriculture and sustainability. Indeed, the document calls for "a sustainable agriculture system that guarantees food production and safeguards biodiversity". The manifesto stresses the need to reform the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), by "lifting bureaucratic burdens for farmers and supporting a sustainable food production with respect for biodiversity and animal welfare". This can support objectives of the 8th Environmental Action Plan (EAP), and targets of SDG 2.[4] Finally, the document also calls for "new rules for genetically-engineered crops to increase productivity and to reduce the amount of pesticides used", which could to some extent participate in the pesticides use reduction target of Farm to Fork.[5]

Then, the manifesto makes no reference to **healthy food**, only to **affordable** one. Indeed, it calls for more capacity on transport routes "to secure food supply at affordable prices", which hints at **food security**. There are no references to the **Sustainable Food System Framework**, **Farm to Fork, nor of dietary patterns**. The manifesto does reflect the question of labelling, but solely from a food waste perspective, focusing on expiry dates. However, the document does call for the fostering of an environment where people can thrive, while "keeping food affordable, securing our food systems", and states a commitment to "supporting and providing opportunities for consumers and farmers to adapt to the sustainable transition while reducing our agricultural sector's climate impact". It also stresses that sustainable agriculture and food systems are "essential for our wellbeing". These elements could participate in a target of SDG 2.[6]

Healthy and sustainable food systems and food environments are a priority in the **EPHA manifesto**, calling for a reinforcement of the EU food policy with dedicated regulations and budget. It also calls for healthier diet options. While the ALDE manifesto provides elements on food systems and their sustainability, the "healthy" side of the issue is lacking, as it remains focused on agriculture.

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[4] Objective - 8th EAP - Art 2.2.f - Promoting environmental aspects of sustainability and significantly reducing key environmental and climate pressures related to the Union's production and consumption, in particular in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system; Targets - SDG2 - 2.2: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

[5] Targets - Farm to Fork - reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50% and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030

[6] Targets - SDG2 - 2.2: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

Non-Communicable Diseases

References to **non-communicable diseases**, risk factors and **commercial determinants of health** are completely omitted from the manifesto. Any **prevention** aspect is also missing.

In contrast, the **EPHA manifesto** includes a focus NCDs as they represent the largest burden of ill health and early death in the EU. Addressing the current challenges they present is therefore crucial, together with fostering the development of healthy environments, sustainable food systems and prevention of diseases.

Mental health

Reference to **mental health** is completely missing from the manifesto.

Conversely, the **EPHA manifesto** calls for a Mental Health Strategy to be developed as an integral part of the European Health Strategy. This includes deploying efforts and resources to strengthen mental health services, awareness campaigns and the fight against stigmatisation. Especially in the context of crisis, the EPHA manifesto highlights the need to prioritise and facilitated access to mental health support especially for children, adolescents and marginalised groups.

Health Equity

Overall, **health equity** is partially addressed in the manifesto. While some important topics are addressed, some others are missing. There is a focus on inequities and discrimination, especially regarding **LGBTI+ individuals**. However, the manifesto fails to mention the topics of **poverty, energy poverty** and **housing**, which are critical determinants of health. Although **gender equality** is addressed, its economic aspect is not mentioned. Content is also lacking around the concept of a **just transition**. Therefore, the assessment of the health equity topic must be carefully nuanced.

Although no mention is made of the need for better data on inequities, the topic of **discrimination** is quite strongly tackled with concrete measures to address it and to foster equality. These are mainly focused on LGBTI+ rights and gender equity. Foreseen measures include legalising and recognising "same-sex marriage and rainbow families" and ensuring "their rights, including free movement within the EU, are enshrined in EU legislation". There is also a commitment to "continue improving LGBTI+ rights and supporting individuals in building their families through paths to recognised parenthood, protecting the rights of children". To guarantee "robust equal rights for LGBTI+ individuals in every sphere of life" the manifesto also proposes to "fast-track the Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive". Furthermore, the manifesto foresees expanding "the EU Crimes list to include hate speech and hate crime, and include gender, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation and disabilities, alongside racism and xenophobia, as areas in which hate crime can manifest itself". It also puts forward the intention to "make full use of the conditionality principle in Article 7 and expand the annual rule of law report scope to include all values in Article 2 to protect and promote […] equality, respect for human rights and rights of minorities […] ". These measures align with some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[7]. One target[8] related to social security policies was also touched upon, although not with enough detail and depth.

The manifesto also addresses the topic of **gender equity**, and the **distribution of care**. It plans to "break down barriers by increasing diversity in all spheres of influence and ensure sufficient access to parental leave across European countries and institutions", including specific dispositions for Members of the European Parliament. It also plans to promote "a more balanced distribution of care responsibilities". Regarding **sexual and reproductive health and rights** such as abortion and "other gender-based care", the manifesto foresees securing "equal and safe access" to them. Indeed, it plans to "incorporate

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[7] Goals - SDGs - 10: reduce inequality within and among countries. Targets - SD10 - 10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

[8] Targets - SD10 - 10.4: Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.

the right to abortion into the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and continue striving for affordable contraceptives and menstrual health products". Gender-based violence is also addressed, calling for "the ratification of remaining countries to the Istanbul Convention, a harmonised definition of rape based on the lack of consent, and the implementation of EU-wide restraining orders". Child abuse, online violence and cyberbullying are also mentioned. All these elements align to different extents with many of the SDGs[9], although others are left unaddressed[10].

Looking at international global goals and targets, all those concerning **poverty** and **housing** are left unaddressed[11]. The manifesto only mentions in passing the intention of making "living spaces" and "energy more affordable". Therefore, overall, some important facets of health equity are missing.

Indeed, the **EPHA manifesto** addresses the "poverty trap", which puts the most marginalised and underserved groups at risk for their health. It especially highlights the growing poverty crisis and its impact on health, therefore calling for a just transition. While the ALDE manifesto addresses inequalities, discrimination and racism, it does not make the link with health. The EPHA manifesto also stresses the need for improved data collection, especially regarding the implementation and development of anti-discrimination measures, which the ALDE manifesto does not. Therefore, overall, the two manifestos are insufficiently aligned with each other.

Access to care

The topic of **access to care** is addressed in a very limited way in the ALDE manifesto. While one specific mention is made of securing "equal and safe access" to **sexual and reproductive health and rights**, it is not nearly sufficient to address the broader issues of access to health and care and of access to medicines.

On the other hand, the **EPHA manifesto** underlines the need for equal access to health and care, as well as medicines across the EU and globally, referring to the implementation of the Pharma Package and the Global Health Strategy.

Digital transformation

Digital transformation of society and economy is well mentioned in the manifesto. It also provides a few elements regarding health systems. The manifesto provides general elements regarding **digital inclusion**. Indeed, the document stresses that "European digital tools should reflect European values and contribute to tackling climate change, fostering individual freedom and equality of opportunity, and enhancing democratic participation". It also calls for measures fostering digital equality, using the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), to foster digital skills, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups, and on public education. The document stresses the need to boost **digital literacy** and skills of all. Several elements hint at boosting digital skills in some sectors, including

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[9]   Goals - SDGs - 5: achieve gender equality. Targets - SDG5 - 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. Targets - SDG5 - 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. Targets - SDG5 - 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate. Targets - SDG5 - 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences. Targets - SDG5 - 5.c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

[10] Targets - SDG5 - 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Targets - SDG5 - 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. Targets - SDG5 - 5.a: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

[11] Goals - SDGs - 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere. Targets - SDG1 - 1.1.: By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere. Targets - SDG1 - 1.2.: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions. Targets - SDG1 - 1.4.: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance. Targets - SDG11 - 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

healthcare. This is further developed in the health workforce section. On the **digital divide**, the manifesto calls for the acceleration of the "deployment of secure, resilient, very high-capacity networks" to "bridge the connectivity gap, in particular in small cities, rural and remote areas".

AI is hinted at in a very general statement, calling for a vision of "a human-centric innovation that prevents authoritarian practices through rules to protect our fundamental rights". Data protection is also mentioned as a general principle. The manifesto proposes a digital rulebook "to foster private investment, by focusing on the implementation of recently adopted rules". Specifically, it should ensure that when there is new digital legislation, it should focus on "incentives, technological openness, the protection of citizens' data and privacy and the power of innovation to free up space for more investments".

Digitalisation is tackled in a general manner, with calls for investments and innovation in the digital transformation, relying particularly on funding programmes and "new fiscal rules" to "incentivise countries to reorient public investments" towards the digital transition. Overall, there is insufficient focus on the digitalisation of health systems, with simply a mention of the need to implement "a digital-first principle to promote the potential of digital technologies" and accelerate the digitalisation in sectors including healthcare. The manifesto makes no reference to the **European Health Data Space (EHDS)** and its implementation, nor to its mechanisms. E-health, the use of digital tools in healthcare and telemedicine is also not addressed.

The ALDE manifesto puts an emphasis on the digitalization of society, but insufficiently steers it towards the health and care sector. This would have been very relevant as the EHDS needs to be implemented. Digitalisation of health systems is part of priority 3 of **EPHA's manifesto**, which includes the promotion of digital health literacy and digital skills, the ethical use of digital health tools and data, and an inclusive digital transition. These elements are tackled in a general way in the ALDE manifesto and could potentially support the digitalization of health systems. EPHA also stresses the need to facilitate epidemiology data collection, and cross-country secure data sharing in line with the European Health Data Space.

Environment and health

Throughout the manifesto, several mentions are made to a "sustainable and digital transformation" and for the need to "clearly prioritise investments and innovation" in these areas. A commitment to "reduce our dependencies and decouple growth from the use of natural resources, rising negative climate and health impacts" is also made. In the manifesto, this is the only explicit reference made to the link between environment and **health**. Nevertheless, no clear reference is made to a **One Health** approach. The manifesto also suggests reflecting on EU spending levels and distribution among policies. It is argued that "all EU policies and economic instruments should be spent on and in support of the shift to the sustainable and digital economy". The manifesto also mentions that "new fiscal rules must incentivise countries to reorient public investments" to foster the transition. It is mentioned that "the European Investment Bank should contribute with investments in critical products and projects within green energy production, technology, and infrastructure, to ensure competitiveness against non-EU manufacturers, and ensure open strategic autonomy for the EU". Although these elements contribute to some targets of the 8th Environment Action Programme (EAP)[12], references to **investments** remain rather vague.

The manifesto addresses the **polluter pays principle**, also included in the 8th EAP[13]. It suggests that "new EU resources from the Emissions Trading System (ETS), the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the international tax on multinationals should be fit for purpose and earmarked to the sustainable, resilient and digital transition, not just a way to fill gaps in the general budget". In addition, it proposes to "expand the scope of the European Emissions Trading System (ETS) to cover all remaining carbon-polluting sectors and develop a technology-neutral certification system for verified negative emissions".

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12 Target - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Financing the transition: increase spending by households, corporations and governments on preventing, reducing and eliminating pollution and other environmental degradation. Target - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Sustainable investments: increase the issuance of green bonds to boost public and private financing for green investments.
13 Target - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Making polluters pay: increase the share of environmental taxes in total revenues from taxes and social contributions. Target - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Making polluters pay: reduce environmentally harmful subsidies, in particular fossil fuel subsidies, with a view to phasing them out without delay.

However, no mention is made of **air quality** and **pollution** and the Ambient Air Quality Directive, leaving some targets[14] of the Green Deal and of the 8th EAP unaddressed. **Policies on water** and references of related international goals and targets[15] are also missing from the document.

The topics of **waste** and **circular economy** are addressed. The manifesto commits to "use our resources more efficiently and move to a circular economy, to reduce our dependencies on importing critical raw materials". Furthermore, it foresees providing businesses with "incentives to invest in and adopt sustainable production to decouple economic growth from use of primary resources, including via diversification, reuse, and repair". It also takes a stance to "vigorously oppose premature obsolescence across all commercial and industrial sectors". To efficiently tackle waste, it suggests turning to "innovative product design and packaging" and exploring "the possibilities of an EU-wide deposit return scheme for packaging and advanced container standards". In addition, it foresees promoting "investments in waste management and recycling facilities within Europe" and encouraging and facilitating food donations to avoid food waste". Lastly, the manifesto foresees **empowering citizens** "to make informed decisions through carbon footprint transparency on product labels, as well as changing the rules on the date marking of food products". These mentions contribute to a couple of goals and objectives of the SDGs[16] and the 8th EAP[17]. However, while some indications on how to tackle these topics are given in the manifesto, they remain addressed only on a superficial level.

Furthermore, the manifesto touches upon the topic of **biodiversity,** highlighting that it is being harmed by the intensive use of natural resources that cannot keep up with the supply that the planet can provide. The development of "a European strategy for the bioeconomy, including the sustainable use of biomass incorporating land use considerations" is also foreseen.

One **additional relevant element** that is presented in the manifesto was not foreseen by our analytical framework. Indeed, the manifesto brings forward the proposal to "empower the European Environmental Agency to become a fully operational authority ensuring consistent implementation of environmental standards across the EU and supporting the Member States on this". Although this proposal could be expected to have a positive impact on environmental policy, overall, the manifesto presents only few concrete measures on the topic and many international goals and targets are not addressed or only partially addressed[18]. Therefore, this topic is only insufficiently addressed.

On the other hand, the **EPHA manifesto** focuses further on air pollution and emissions-reduction, on the One Health approach, on breaking policy silos, and on implementing the Green Deal in fostering healthier environments. Although the ALDE manifesto mentions in passing a link between environment and health, EPHA's makes it the central piece of its discourse, providing a stronger focus on the impact on health.

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[14] Targets - Green Deal - reduction of emissions from cars by 55% by 2030. Targets - Green Deal - 0 emissions from new cars by 2035. Target - 8th EAP 2.2.d - Reduce premature deaths from air pollution by 55% (from 2005 levels) by 2030.

[15] Goals - SDGs - 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Targets - SDG6 - 6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all. Targets - SDG6 - 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally. Target - 8th EAP - 2.1 - Reduce water scarcity.

[16] Goals - SDGs - 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

[17] Objective - 8th EAP - Art 2.2.c - Advancing towards a well-being economy that gives back to the planet more than it takes and accelerating the transition to a non-toxic circular economy, where growth is regenerative, resources are used efficiently and sustainably, and the waste hierarchy is applied.

[18] Targets - SDG11 - 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management. Targets - SDG11 - 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities. Targets - SDG12 - 12.2: By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources. Targets - SDG12 - 12.3: By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses. Objective - 8th EAP - Art 2.2.d - Pursuing zero pollution, including in relation to harmful chemicals, in order to achieve a toxic-free environment, including for air, water and soil, as well as in relation to light and noise pollution, and protecting the health and wellbeing of people, animals and ecosystems from environment-related risks and negative impacts. Objective - 8th EAP - 2.2.e - Protecting, preserving and restoring marine and terrestrial biodiversity and the biodiversity of inland waters inside and outside protected areas by, inter alia, halting and reversing biodiversity loss and improving the state of ecosystems and their functions and the services they provide, and by improving the state of the environment, in particular air, water and soil, as well as by combating desertification and soil degradation. Objective - 8th EAP - Art 2.1 - The 8th EAP shall have the long-term priority objective that by 2050 at the latest, people live well, within the planetary boundaries in a well-being economy where nothing is wasted, growth is regenerative, climate neutrality in the Union has been achieved and inequalities have been significantly reduced. A healthy environment underpins the well-being of all people and is an environment in which biodiversity is conserved, ecosystems thrive, and nature is protected and restored, leading to increased resilience to climate change, weather- and climate-related disasters and other environmental risks. The Union sets the pace for ensuring the prosperity of present and future generations globally, guided by intergenerational responsibility.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation

The topic of **climate change adaptation and mitigation** is insufficiently addressed in the manifesto. Although some positive elements are present in the document, several important elements are missing or addressed without sufficient depth and detail. Although some considerations align with them, the manifesto surprisingly does not mention the **Green Deal, Fit for 55**, or the **Paris Agreement.** No mention of marginalised groups or **environmental inequalities** is also made. Indeed, references to the concept of a **just transition** are insufficient. Furthermore, the manifesto includes a questionable statement. It shares the intention to "achieve a trans-Atlantic free trade agreement with the US as the best way to fulfil our shared climate objective and create jobs and growth opportunities".

The manifesto, however, plans to "prioritise implementation of adopted energy and climate rules to reach our targets, including the 2040 target proposed by the European Commission". This consideration is compatible with one target of the Green Deal[19].

Some other elements are favourable with one Green Deal target[20] on **energy efficiency.** Indeed, the manifesto plans on fostering the optimisation of energy use and home renovations **"**through incentives, digital solutions, and the creation of "one-stop" renovation offices". It also suggests that energy efficiency programmes for public facilities should be promoted by governments. Simplifying, shortening and speeding up "the digitalisation of licensing and permitting procedures of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects across EU Member States" is also foreseen. Finally, to improve efficiency, integration of EU electricity markets and **security of supply**, the manifesto suggests deepening "electricity interconnections between Member States", setting an EU interconnection target of at least 15% by 2030. Although the manifesto addresses energy efficiency and security of supply, it does not allude much to **access to affordable sustainable energy** as set in the SDGs[21], nor does it give concrete measures.

On the topic of **emissions**, the manifesto highlights using "the full spectrum of solutions" while "upholding the principle of technology neutrality to reduce emissions and find alternatives for existing ones". The manifesto urges to "accelerate **decarbonisation**", also using nuclear power, and "strongly rejecting the idea of "green" natural gas". It also plans to "invest in all types of renewable […] energy sources". By "accelerating the deployment of **renewable and clean energies**", the manifesto argues, would allow to reduce dependencies on external sources. The manifesto also foresees investing in "carbon removal, capture and storage technologies" and to "increase public and private collaboration and investments in grid capacity and storage". Furthermore, it states that "new EU resources from the Emissions Trading System (ETS), the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the international tax on multinationals should be fit for purpose and earmarked to the sustainable, resilient and digital transition, not just a way to fill gaps in the general budget". Finally, the manifesto suggests expanding "the scope of the European Emissions Trading System (ETS) to cover all remaining carbon-polluting sectors and develop a technology-neutral certification system for verified negative emissions".

Public transport and the **decarbonisation of transport** are also mentioned in the manifesto. It includes plans to "facilitate intra-European cooperation across sectors, such as a functional pan-European rail network". Furthermore, it plans to "enable decarbonisation for all types of transport […] through infrastructure development. This includes "the completion of missing cross-border transport connections, electrification of public transport and charging infrastructure in less densely populated areas, active mobility across national, regional, and local levels as well as using sustainable and innovative technologies to decarbonise the freight and heavy goods transport". Finally, the manifesto foresees investing "in core public infrastructure and connectivity, with a special emphasis on improving electrical and transportation systems". These elements therefore align with the 8th EAP[22].

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[19] Targets - Green Deal - no net emission of greenhouse gases by 2050.
[20] Targets - Green Deal - 11.7% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.
[21] Goals - SDG - 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
[22] Objective - 8th EAP - Art 2.2.f - Promoting environmental aspects of sustainability and significantly reducing key environmental and climate pressures related to the Union's production and consumption, in particular in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system. Target - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - Increase the share of collective transport modes (buses, coaches and trains).

Several international goals and targets are insufficiently addressed[23], and several others are not addressed[24]. Therefore, overall, the manifesto insufficiently addresses the topic of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

On the other hand, the **EPHA manifesto** puts a strong emphasis on the Green Deal's implementation, with a particular focus on the just transition. Focusing on air quality and energy poverty, EPHA also advocates for a fair energy transition. It also promotes a One Health approach and breaking policy silos to approach climate, environment and health together. It also adds more on the impact of climate change on health, and the need for health systems to adapt.

Commitment to global and multilateral initiatives

Although the manifesto provides elements regarding international cooperation and global initiatives, its discourse remains very market- and trade-centred. References and commitments to global and multilateral initiatives related to global public health are missing. The manifesto makes no explicit reference to the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),** the **Paris Agreement**, or to a **pandemic treaty**. Similarly, the **Global Health Strategy** and the **One Health** concept are not mentioned.

On the other hand, **EPHA's manifesto** takes SDGs, Paris Agreement, and the One Health approach at its core in addressing the current permacrisis context. It puts an emphasis on the interlinkages between environmental protection, equity, particularly with leaving no one behind. EPHA also stresses the need for cross-sectoral policy development, and the need to address cross-border health threats.

Health crisis preparedness

The manifesto plans to "ensure funding programmes, in particular regional and social funds, are robust and flexible enough to adapt to strategic challenges [...]". It also states that "these programmes should be capable of being directed for crisis response targeted at communities and citizens, when needed, rather than creating additional red tape and administrative processes". However, the manifesto makes no clear reference to **health crisis preparedness**.

Conversely, the **EPHA manifesto** puts an emphasis on the permacrisis context, alongside socio-economic instability. It stresses that to address and prepare for crises, stronger cross-border cooperation and healthy environments need to be fostered, health systems strengthened, learning the lessons from COVID-19. It also stresses that preparedness policies need to take into account that crises exacerbate inequities, calling for policies that leave no one behind.

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[23] Targets - Green Deal - 42.5% renewable energy target for 2030. Targets - Fit for 55 - reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. Targets - Paris Agreement - keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius - i.e., reducing emissions by 45% by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050. Target - 8th EAP - 2.1 - Reduce environmental inequalities and ensure a fair transition. Objective - 8th EAP - Art 2.2.a - Swift and predictable reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and, at the same time, enhancement of removals by natural sinks in the Union to attain the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target as laid down in Regulation (EU) 2021/1119, in line with the Union's climate and environment objectives, whilst ensuring a just transition that leaves no one behind . Target - 8th EAP 2.2.a - Reduce net GHG emissions by at least 55% by 2030 from 1990 levels. Target - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - Reduce by 2030 the primary and the final energy consumption levels to respectively 992.5 and 763 million tonnes of oil equivalent. Target - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - At least 42.5% of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption by 2030. Goal - SDGs - 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Targets - SDG13 - 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning. Targets - SDG13 - 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

[24] Targets - SDG1 - 1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters. Targets - SDG13 - 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries. Objective - 8th EAP - Art 2.2.b: continuous progress in enhancing and mainstreaming adaptive capacity, including on the basis of ecosystem approaches, strengthening resilience and adaptation and reducing the vulnerability of the environment, society and all sectors of the economy to climate change, while improving prevention of, and preparedness for, weather- and climate-related disasters. Target - 8th EAP 2.2.b - Decrease the area impacted by drought and loss of vegetation productivity.

Resilience of health systems

The manifesto does not address the question of the **resilience of health systems**. No reference is made to funding or **investments** in health systems, or to the concept of W**ellbeing Economy**.

The **EPHA manifesto**, on the other hand, calls more specifically for a strengthening of health systems, particularly through a dedicated and ambitious EU health budget. It stresses that health is an investment, not a cost. Linking to the concept of the Wellbeing Economy, the EPHA manifesto highlights that preventing ill health through health protection, health-enabling environments, and primary care, will develop healthier and more resilient societies and economies. In strengthening health systems, the health and care workforce crisis should also be addressed.

Health workforce

The manifesto hints at the **health and care workforce** on several occasions, through a generic approach to skills and labour market. Indeed, ALDE commits to navigate through the crises the EU is facing while creating jobs and strengthening key sectors, with a focus on **daycares** and **hospitals**. The manifesto also suggests different elements regarding **skills**, that could impact positively the health workforce. Seeking to strengthen the interconnectedness of the labour market, the manifesto calls for a revision of the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and academic and vocational degrees. The document also calls for the fostering of vocational programmes to "urgently upskill key professions", including in health care, and particularly regarding the **digital transition**. Elements also stress the need to strengthen the Bologna Process and promote **lifelong learning** "and a genuinely mobile labour force" that "is prepared for the digital and green transitions". It also suggests **apprenticeships** for the mid-career and "extend the Erasmus+ programmes to students at all educational levels".

The manifesto does hint at general **shortages** in some sectors but does not mention medical deserts. It stresses reliance on **mobility** to attract workers to the EU in key sectors, including healthcare. Finally, there are no mentions of the **working conditions** issue. Overall, the manifesto lacks in concrete measures targeting the health sectors and does not reflect the urgency of the matter regarding the health and care workforce. The situation has often been reflected as a "ticking time bomb", and the issue has been gaining momentum on the EU agenda, between the Bucharest Declaration and the Belgian Presidency of the Council.

The ALDE manifesto does not fully align with the **EPHA manifesto** on this point, even though it provides strong elements regarding skills and training, in general. The EPHA manifesto places a strong focus on addressing the shortages and medical deserts question and placing it as a priority for the next mandate. Elements supporting this could include long-term planning, guidelines on mobility, and improving working conditions, particularly regarding the workers' health and mental health. Particularly, while the mobility question is touched upon in the ALDE manifesto, it is important to be mindful of not creating further shortages in other countries, both within and outside the EU. However, both manifestos align on the need for investments in education and lifelong learning opportunities.

Antimicrobial resistance

The manifesto makes no reference to **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)** even though it is one of the current top global public health burdens.

On the other hand, the **EPHA manifesto** calls on all involved sectors to actively collaborate and lead in the global fight against antimicrobial resistance through a One Health approach.

Research in health

The topic of **research in health**, or even research in general, is not developed in the manifesto. The document only lightly touches upon it in the context of clean technologies and security, alluding to facilitating European cooperation. **Horizon Europe**, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation is also not mentioned.

However, research and innovation are key assets in the context of multicrises that the EU is facing, and on advancing on the fight against health threats, NCDs, AMR and more. Therefore, there is a need for stronger measures in that regard.

In its manifesto, **EPHA** has called for stronger support to research on several aspects. As an overarching element, EPHA calls for a comprehensive European Health Strategy, that would comprise research and innovation elements. Priority 5 also focuses on the need to secure capacity for resilience and create healthy environments, particularly in the permacrisis context. For that, the promotion of health-focused research and innovation is paramount.

4. Conclusions

The ALDE manifesto insufficiently addresses public health in general. None of the assessed topics are covered in a manner that provides details regarding measures for health. Half of the analysed topics are not mentioned or developed in the manifesto, including central elements for public health, such as mental health, or NCDs. Public health is not a priority in the manifesto. However, some other topics, brought forward in a general way, do provide elements that could positively impact health, such as elements on food systems, health and care workforce, digitalisation, or environmental and climate policies. Nevertheless, central policy files are not mentioned, even the Green Deal, while those files will need to be implemented in the next mandate to ensure advancement on public health issues, and ensure we have learnt lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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