





### Addressed (cont.)

...**systems** and proposes concrete measures to do so. The manifesto aligns well with many **global and multilateral commitments**, such as the SDGs. It stressed the importance of achieving the Paris Agreement goals and targets and of the fight against pandemics. **Health and equity** is the section that is the most well addressed in the European Left manifesto. Special attention is given to inequalities, gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, housing and poverty (including energy poverty), with specific measures foreseen. On **food systems**, the manifesto highlights the need for an “environmentally sustainable agriculture”, and it promotes a model that can foster healthy food.

Key proposals: European Fund for public services; EU directive on inequalities and discrimination; permanent Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) to reduce inequalities; EU Equal Pay Directive; recognition of unpaid and underpaid care work; EU Directive on reproductive health; EU policy framework to eliminate gender-based violence; recognition of the term ‘femicide’ in EU and national legislation; common EU definition of rape; Anti-poverty strategy; European Basic Income Directive; legal right to free access to energy for basic needs, EU directive on housing; marriage and parenthood right for all couples; depathologisation of trans identities and access to treatment; implementation of the Sustainable Mobility Directive; changes in the banking policy of the ECB to foster green investments; reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 65% by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by 2035.

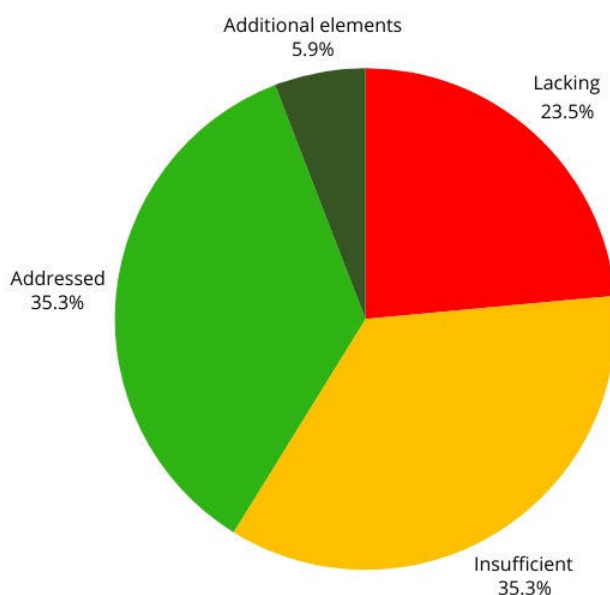


### Additional relevant elements to public health

The manifesto mentions **treaty changes** and a more central role of the European Parliament, which could be linked to further action on public health. Indeed, it foresees enshrining universal and free access to health and care in EU primary law, as well as a “European public pharmaceutical/medial hub”.

## 2. Focus<sup>1</sup>

### Assessing content related to health by number of topics



- Non-communicable diseases**  
 Mental health  
 Digital transformation  
 Antimicrobial resistance
- Access to care**  
 Health crisis preparedness  
 Health workforce  
 Research in health  
 Environment and health  
 Climate change adaptation/mitigation
- Public health as a priority**  
 Health equity  
 Sustainable food systems  
 Global and multilateral initiatives  
 Institutional elements  
 Resilience of health systems
- Treaty changes and institutional tools**

<sup>1</sup> Disclaimer: this visual reflects the coverage of the 16 topics listed in the analyses. Some of the topics comprise more elements than others.

### 3. Analysis

#### Public health as a priority

Several mentions and proposals related to **public health and wellbeing** are present in the European Left manifesto. Notably, these include mentions of **strengthening health systems**, fostering “clean and healthy” environments, universal and free health coverage, which will be further detailed in the next sections. These elements all support priority 1 of the Global Health Strategy<sup>2</sup> and goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>3</sup>. This suggests that health will be regarded, if not as a priority, at least as an important topic for EU policymaking.

However, the manifesto fails to address the topics of **health promotion, prevention**, and the **health budget**. A **Health in All Policies** vision is also lacking, with only few elements hinting to it.

The European Left manifesto appears to be somewhat in line with **EPHA’s priorities**, which include “Keeping health as a top priority on the EU political agenda” and “Providing the means for an ambitious EU health policy”. Plans for health policies are, however, not supported by a plan for securing an ambitious health budget, which is not a trivial element for success. Nonetheless, health and wellbeing seem to maintain a good level of priority and due consideration within the European Left manifesto.

#### Institutional elements

The manifesto brings forward several proposals that could alter the **EU institutional setting**, as well as its **competences**. It refers to “a revision of the European Treaty”, following the Conference on the Future of Europe. It argues that a reform is needed to allow “radical social and ecological transformation and the effective and democratic sovereignty of the people”. Specifically to health, the manifesto envisages the creation of a “European public pharmaceutical/medial hub”. It also foresees guaranteeing through “EU primary law” the “universal and free access to care and public health systems, including contraceptive services and safe abortion” across the EU. In the context of a public debate on the future of Europe, the manifesto also highlights the **role of civil society** and calls for “an independent, solidarity-based, participatory and democratic re-founding of the EU”.

Furthermore, the manifesto calls for the European Parliament to “have the right to initiate legislation, to propose laws, to elect the European Commission, to propose and decide on the EU budget and to control the activities of the European Central Bank”. The manifesto also expresses the need for a “central role” of the European Parliament, together with national parliaments, in “policy areas of shared competence”.

All these elements could be linked to different extents to further action on public health. However, the manifesto fails to mention the **European Health Union**, the **SANT committee** in the European Parliament and the **role of the European Commission at all**. Moreover, the EU’s role in international organisations is insufficiently mentioned, which is only hinted at in the context of the fight against pandemics.

The calls advanced in the manifesto come in a context where enlargement and a related Treaty change could be foreseen, with several candidate countries set to join the EU. The furthering of a European Health Union would also support the continuation of what has been triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and would answer the needs to address other public health issues with a stronger European role.

While there are no direct mentions for placing public health on the agenda and supporting an ambitious European health budget, these calls are somewhat aligned with the priorities outlined by EPHA’s 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. EPHA also called for a recognition of the crucial role of civil society through more sustainable financial support.

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<sup>2</sup> Deliver better health and well-being of people across the life course.

<sup>3</sup> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

## Sustainable food systems

The manifesto mentions the need for an “environmentally sustainable agriculture”, and promotes “a model of small, sustainable farms and healthy food in which products have a short commercial circuit”. The text expresses the intention of establishing “an agro-ecological policy model for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) [...] ensuring fair incomes for farmers and providing quality food, soil protection, and food sovereignty as well as mitigating climate change”. In the context of the CAP, it presents the aim of “gradually abolishing the system of allocating funds according to area and redirecting them towards environmentally friendly, sustainable agriculture”. While the EU’s **Farm to Fork** is not explicitly mentioned, the content of the manifesto seems in line with it, as well as with the **European Green Deal** to some extent. The content of the manifesto could also be viewed as aligned with some EU and international goals and targets such as goal 2 of the SDGs<sup>4</sup> and article 2.2.f of the 8<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Plan (EAP)<sup>5</sup>.

On the downside, **food security** is only hinted at, approached from the perspective of food sovereignty. There is also no mention of a **legislative framework for sustainable food systems, dietary patterns, nor food and alcohol labelling**. Overall, more concrete measures would be needed.

The **EPHA manifesto** includes a priority for healthy and sustainable food systems and food environments by reinforcing the EU’s common food policy with dedicated regulations and budget. It underlines the importance of resilient and sustainable food production at all levels of governance. Thus, comparing the manifestos, priorities around food systems appear to be aligned to some degree. However, the EPHA manifesto provides more element regarding labelling, shifting to healthier dietary patterns and ensuring that healthier food choices are made more available.

## Non-Communicable Diseases

The manifesto makes no reference to **non-communicable diseases, risk factors** nor **commercial determinants of health**.

NCDs are, on the other hand, quite central to the **EPHA manifesto** as they represent the largest burden of ill health and early death in the EU. They are therefore intrinsically linked to the development of healthy environments, sustainable food systems and prevention in the EPHA manifesto.

## Mental health

The European Left manifesto makes no reference to **mental health**.

The **EPHA manifesto** calls for a Mental Health Strategy to be developed as an integral part of the European Health Strategy, with efforts and resources turned to strengthening mental health services, awareness campaigns and fighting stigmatisation. Furthermore, EPHA specifically highlights the need to prioritise and facilitated access to mental health support for children, adolescents and marginalised groups, especially in this context of crises.

## Health Equity

**Health equity** is significantly addressed throughout the manifesto, which calls for a “green social contract” to meet the challenges of our century and address inequalities. Indeed, the fight against **inequalities, discrimination** and “all forms of oppression” holds a central place in the European Left’s

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<sup>4</sup> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

discourse, with concrete measures put forward in the text. These align with goal 10 of the SDGs<sup>6</sup> and its targets. The manifesto calls for the promotion of “anti-discrimination laws” and for the definition of hate speech, which would allow for it to be effectively addressed. Furthermore, it proposes “a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons” and the adoption of an EU directive “against social inequalities and discrimination in education based on class, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, nationality, residence status, and religious belief”. Moreover, the European Left states that “social protection cover for health, pensions, and unemployment must be universal for all people in the EU, wherever they come from”. The manifesto also suggests transforming the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) “into a permanent EU mechanism to reduce inequalities and promote sustainable economic growth, with a focus on supporting and modernising SMEs”. Adapting wages and pensions to address the cost-of-living crisis are also proposed.

Finally, radically distinguishing itself from other party manifestos, the European Left calls for “public control and ownership of common goods and services with democratic and participatory planning of the economy”. This, the manifesto argues, is “essential” to “save humanity and the planet and to end social inequality”. On this, feasibility would need to be assessed.

The manifesto gives special attention to the topics of **gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, housing and poverty**. Indeed, the manifesto advocates for the “fundamental rights to marriage and parenthood for all couples”. Furthermore, it calls for “the depathologisation of trans identities and gender self-determination, as well as a guarantee of recognition of these identities and access to treatment for the free development of these identities throughout the EU”. Moreover, it campaigns for the recognition of these identities as a ground for asylum.

On **gender equality**, the manifesto considers it as “fundamental to a human economy”. It also puts forward some specific measures. These include closing the gender pay gap by the “immediate transposition of the EU Equal Pay Directive into national law in all Member States”, as well as with “increased and guaranteed pensions for women”. Furthermore, it calls for the full recognition of the role of unpaid and underpaid care work. Indeed, the manifesto foresees investing in “public care systems and address the disproportionate responsibility for care work borne by women and girls, supporting its defamilialisation and tackling women’s poverty”. In addition, the European Left proposes “an EU Directive requiring EU Member States to provide access to antenatal and maternal health services, voluntary family planning and free, safe and legal abortion”. Furthermore, the manifesto takes a clear stance against violence against women, calling for a “comprehensive EU policy framework to eliminate all gender-based violence in all European countries”. It calls for the “EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”. It also demands the “recognition of the term ‘femicide’ in EU and Member State legislation” and the “adoption of a common definition of rape in the EU”. The European Left “wants to make a feminist perspective the criterion for the EU’s economic, environmental and social policies, as well as in health, education and culture”. In the context of a just transition, “women’s empowerment and leadership” and “their access to decision-making on equal terms” are presented as key factors. Therefore, the manifesto is well in line with goal 5 of the SDGs<sup>7</sup>, as well as with many of its targets: 5.1<sup>8</sup>, 5.2<sup>9</sup>, 5.4<sup>10</sup>, 5.5<sup>11</sup>, 5.6<sup>12</sup>, 5.c<sup>13</sup>. Targets 5.3<sup>14</sup> and 5.a<sup>15</sup> are not addressed.

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<sup>6</sup> Reduce inequality within and among countries.

<sup>7</sup> Achieve gender equality.

<sup>8</sup> End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

Addressing the topic of **poverty**, the manifesto calls for the “adoption of an integrated anti-poverty strategy that tackles the multidimensional problem of poverty and social exclusion”. Measures include “a European tax on the wealthy to fund essential investment for poverty reduction and [...] social transitions”, as well as a “European Basic Income Directive” to ensure that a minimum income “that covers the basic needs for a decent life (food, housing, energy, access to culture, funds for emergencies, etc.)” is guaranteed in each Member State. These measures align with goal 1 of the SDGs.<sup>16</sup> Special mention is made to **energy poverty**, with a call for “the legal right of all people to have free access to the amount of energy they need for heating and household purposes”. Indeed, the European Left considers “basic energy security” to be a “human right”.

As for **housing**, and relating to SDG 11<sup>17</sup>, the manifesto calls for the right to “decent, affordable, and climate friendly housing” to be enshrined in EU primary law. In the text can be found measures fostering investment for public housing and housing for students. The European Left suggests an EU directive introducing “legal rent caps”, prohibiting “fixed-term tenancies and forced evictions from primary residences”, limiting “investment companies and their activities” to protect the housing markets. Furthermore, the manifesto calls for the “financing of social housing projects by national or local authorities, non-profit developers and cooperatives through the European Investment Bank (EIB) at 0% interest”.

Although the health equity topic has extensively been addressed in the manifesto, **a couple of elements were found missing**, notably mentions of the **need of data on equality** and specific **antiracism measures**. Mentions of the **inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups in policy** were also found lacking.

Most of the health equity objectives mentioned in the European Left manifesto is in line with **EPHA’s priorities**. These indeed include combatting intersectional health inequalities, poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and racism to ensure equitable health outcomes. The EPHA manifesto also stresses the need for improved data collection, especially regarding the implementation and development of anti-discrimination measures.

## Access to care

The manifesto calls for the promotion of “investments in free and accessible healthcare [...]” by the EU. Indeed, it foresees the guarantee by EU primary law of “universal and free **access to care and public health systems**, including contraceptive services and safe abortion throughout the EU”. More specifically, and as already mentioned above, it envisions “an EU Directive requiring EU Member States to provide access to antenatal and maternal health services, voluntary family planning and free, safe and legal abortion”. Furthermore, to “enhance the sustainability of reproduction in an equitable manner”, the European Left wants the creation of “quality care structures for children, the elderly and the disabled”. While the manifesto is in line with priority 2 of the Global Health Strategy<sup>18</sup> and target 1.3 of the SDGs<sup>19</sup>, it fails to mention the issue of **medicines shortages** and the **Pharmaceutical Package**.

The **EPHA manifesto** underlines the need for equal access to care and medicines across the EU and globally. The European Left manifesto appears to be in line with this priority, although the access to medicines dimension is completely left out. Given the fact that such a current important issue is missing, the topic of access to medicines is deemed to be insufficiently addressed.

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<sup>16</sup> End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

<sup>17</sup> Targets - SDG 11 - 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

<sup>18</sup> Strengthen health systems and advance universal health coverage.

<sup>19</sup> Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

## Digital transformation

The manifesto tackles the topic of **digital transformation** only in general terms, calling for a “just transition to human-centred digitalisation”, with hints to AI and inclusivity. The health dimension is completely left out, with no mention of the **digitalisation of health systems, telemedicine and e-Health, digital health tools, digital health literacy and skills**, and the **European Health Data Space**. The manifesto touches lightly upon the topic of **digital inclusion**, focusing mainly on elderly people, teachers and students. It also mentions **AI** and the need to “address the challenges of artificial intelligence (AI) in a socially just way”, excluding “possible discriminatory uses of AI or racially biased systems”. The need to incorporate “the humans-in-control principle” into EU law is also underlined.

This only timidly aligns with the **EPHA manifesto**, which calls for the promotion of digital health literacy and digital skills, the ethical use of digital health tools and data, and an inclusive digital transition. This entails facilitating epidemiology data collection, and cross-country secure data sharing in line with the European Health Data Space.

## Environment and health

The importance given to the **environment**, and to the impact on people’s lives, can be felt throughout the whole manifesto. Indeed, it highlights the “inalienable right of every citizen to live in a clean and healthy environment”. The European Left tightly links the green transition to social justice and “the fight to combat market domination for a just transition towards green economies”. It deems the transition to be essentially related to “a societal transformation of how we produce and consume, adapted to the real needs of the population and to the limits of the planet”. Indeed, it expresses the importance of the transition towards green economies by defining it as a “duty towards nature and towards future generations”. Furthermore, the manifesto foresees integrating “**biodiversity** into all sectoral policies, in particular energy, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, transport, tourism and land-use planning”. Therefore, these elements put forward by the European Left align with some objectives of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP<sup>20</sup>. The concept of **One Health** is not mentioned in the text, but hints to it are disseminated in the text.

However, overall, the European Left tackles this topic on a rather general level, without going too much into detail. Indeed, many elements are hinted at or mentioned, but insufficiently addressed. These are thus only somewhat in line with some of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP’s objectives<sup>21</sup>. For instance, **air quality** and **pollution** are only lightly touched upon through measures related to decreasing dependence on **fossil fuels, sustainable transport** and **aviation**. These include imposing “equal taxes on aircraft and car fuels, eliminating CO<sub>2</sub> exemptions”, and measures to “ban private flights, prioritise trains for journeys under two and a half hours, revive night trains, and expand networks as needed”. Furthermore, the manifesto proposes to “implement the Sustainable Mobility Directive for sustainable spatial planning, emphasising public transport and resisting privatisation”. In line with the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP on fossil fuels subsidies<sup>22</sup>, the manifesto stresses that “the phase-out of fossil fuels must be accelerated”. Among the foreseen measures, the European Left plans to “dismantle the SUV economy through regulations that ensure carbon-neutral, efficient, and road user-friendly car production”. To foster sustainable **investments** and the transition of

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<sup>20</sup> Objective - 8<sup>th</sup> EAP - Art 2.1 - The 8<sup>th</sup> 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. Objective - 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> Objective - 8<sup>th</sup> 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 - 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Target - 8<sup>th</sup> EAP - Art 3 - Making polluters pay: reduce environmentally harmful subsidies, in particular fossil fuel subsidies, with a view to phasing them out without delay.

firm's production, the manifesto proposes to "change the banking policy of the ECB". It suggests a "low rate (0%, or less) for bank loans for investments that reduce carbon emissions and create good jobs; high rates, even penalty rates, for loans that cut jobs, relocate or increase polluting emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>, etc.)".

The manifesto also mentions the topic of **water management**, somewhat hinting at some goals and targets of the SDGs<sup>23</sup> and of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP<sup>24</sup>. Indeed, the manifesto tackles the topic in a rather vague way, without giving any concrete proposals, targets, or a timeframe. It only pledges to "incorporate criteria of economic rationality into water management, considering cost recovery, including environmental costs and scarcity value, and taking into account social, environmental and economic impacts, as well as geographical and climatic conditions".

The manifesto seems to give quite some importance to the creation of healthy environments and green economies. However, the question is whether these few concrete measures would allow to reach European and international goals and targets. In addition, the manifesto fails to mention some significant topics, such as **waste reduction** and **harmful chemicals**.

The **EPHA manifesto** emphasises the interconnectedness of the environment and health, which the European Left manifesto falls a bit short on. The EPHA foresees a comprehensive European Health Strategy on tackling the environmental triple-crisis of climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss. Priorities between the two manifestos seem to be aligned, although the European Left tackles the topic on a rather general level. Indeed, the ideas of breaking silos and of creating healthy environments are common elements.

## Climate change adaptation and mitigation

The manifesto defines **climate change**, together with poverty and war, as current "existential threats". It stresses that these elements are interlinked as "peace is [...] key to this socio-ecological and eco-social transformation". Indeed, a significant part of the European Left's green discourse revolves around the concept of a **just transition**. It highlights the need for "a new green social contract based on justice and respect". The manifesto advocates for "a just transition that ensures job creation, fair distribution of wealth, sound and universal public services and public ownership of the commons". Indeed, it prioritises "a massive investment spending plan for the creation of green jobs", through the mobilisation of "financial resources that exceed the EU budget and the NextGenerationEU development fund".

The manifesto mentions the "imperative need" to achieve the **Paris Agreement** goals, which require "to undergo significant social and economic transformations". Reference is also made to the **Green Deal**, and the challenge of overcoming "the framework of reconciliation with the capitalist system of production" in which it is "stuck". However, its targets on **renewable energy**<sup>25</sup> and **energy efficiency**<sup>26</sup> are barely addressed, with only one concrete proposal obliquely addressing it. Indeed, the manifesto foresees the "approval of a Guaranteed Employment Plan in the European Union" financed by the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). This would focus, among other elements, on "programmes for reforestation and environmental protection, housing renovation and energy efficiency".

Regarding **greenhouse gases**, the European Left foresees to "increase the European Union's target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from 55% to 65% by 2030 and bring forward the date for the European Union's climate neutrality from 2050 to 2035". This not only aligns with the EU's Green Deal, Fit for 55 and Paris Agreement, but goes even beyond the agreed targets. However, the feasibility of this proposal is questionable. In fact, an assessment by the European Environment Agency has found

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<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> Target - 8<sup>th</sup> EAP - 2.1 - Reduce water scarcity.

<sup>25</sup> Targets - Green Deal - 42.5% renewable energy target for 2030.

<sup>26</sup> Targets - Green Deal - 11.7% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.



that current projections suggest that by 2030 only a 48% reduction in net emissions will be reached<sup>27</sup>. According to this report, the attainment of the 55% target set by the EU is unlikely, therefore making the 65% target foreseen by the European Left even more so.

Therefore, recognising climate change as an “emergency” and urging to take action for a just green transition, the manifesto overall aligns with goal 13 of the SDGs<sup>28</sup> and with a target of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP<sup>29</sup>. However, many targets and goals of the SDGs<sup>30</sup> and of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP<sup>31</sup> are insufficiently addressed, especially those related to **renewable energy**. Some others<sup>32</sup>, regarding **climate-related extreme events**, and **awareness and education on climate change** are completely lacking. Some targets of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP<sup>33</sup> on **drought** and **energy consumption** have also failed to be addressed. Aligning with the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP on **sustainable mobility**<sup>34</sup>, the manifesto suggests to “implement the Sustainable Mobility Directive for sustainable spatial planning, emphasising public transport and resisting privatisation”.

These measures are somewhat aligned with the **EPHA manifesto**, especially regarding the just transition and the implementation of the Green Deal and the Paris Agreement. Although the European Left stresses the urgency of transitioning towards green economies, it tackles the topic on a rather superficial level, failing to clearly link it to public health and to provide concrete measures to be implemented. On the other hand, the EPHA manifesto highlights the impact of climate change on health, and the need for health systems to adapt.

## Commitment to global and multilateral initiatives

The manifesto is in line with many of the **SDGs**. The importance of achieving the **Paris Agreement** goals and targets by undergoing “significant social and economic transformations” is also highlighted in the text. Indeed, the European Left regards the achievement of “Paris climate goals” to be “imperative”. The manifesto also touches upon the issue of “the fight against pandemics”, with mentions of the necessary **global cooperation** that they require. Vaccines are also included in the picture, highlighting the need for them “to be declared a common good of humanity”. However, these elements only slightly align with the third priority of the Global Health Strategy<sup>35</sup>, as no explicit mention of prevention and preparedness for cross-border health threats or a **One Health** approach are made in the manifesto.

This corresponds somewhat to the **EPHA manifesto** recommendations, which stress the importance of implementing the SDGs, particularly regarding environmental protection and equity, with the principle of leaving no one behind. Referencing both the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, EPHA also called for cross-sectoral policy development and synergies. Both documents call for the need to address cross-border health threats in a global context. However, while EPHA’s manifesto hints at the WHO draft pandemic treaty, the European Left does not.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/total-greenhouse-gas-emission-trends?activeAccordion=546a7c35-9188-4d23-94ee-005d97c26f2b>

<sup>28</sup> Goal - SDGs - 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

<sup>29</sup> Target - 8<sup>th</sup> EAP - 2.1 - Reduce environmental inequalities and ensure a fair transition.

<sup>30</sup> Goals - SDG - 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Targets - SDG7 - 7.2: By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. Targets - SDG7 - 7.a: By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology. Targets - SDG13 - 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.

<sup>31</sup> Target - 8<sup>th</sup> EAP - 2.2.f - At least 42.5% of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption by 2030.

<sup>32</sup> 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. Targets - SDG13 - 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

<sup>33</sup> Target - 8<sup>th</sup> EAP 2.2.b - Decrease the area impacted by drought and loss of vegetation productivity. Target - 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> Objective - 8<sup>th</sup> 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 - 8<sup>th</sup> EAP - 2.2.f - Increase the share of collective transport modes (buses, coaches and trains).

<sup>35</sup> Prevent and Combat health threats, including pandemics, applying a One Health approach.

## Health crisis preparedness

The topic of **health crisis preparedness** is insufficiently addressed. The manifesto mentions the COVID-19 pandemic and the way it has highlighted “the importance of international action in the face of today’s crises”. It also calls for “global cooperation in the fight against pandemics and for vaccines to be declared a common good of humanity”. However, there is no clear reference to crisis preparedness. In fact, the manifesto does not specify if the “cooperation” and “international action” it calls for includes prevention and preparedness, or if it only refers to the response to health crises.

On the other hand, 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.

## Resilience of health systems

The manifesto mentions the importance of **investments to strengthen public healthcare systems**. To do so, it suggests that the European Central Bank (ECB) provides “direct financing to the states to strengthen public institutions and bodies”, which could mean more investments in public health systems. Furthermore, it proposes to “create a European Fund for public services, financed at 0% by the ECB, with democratic governance, for investment, massive recruitment and training, particularly in [...] health [...]”. Whether such an approach would require an alteration or extension of the mandate for the ECB is not addressed, nor is there any detail on how to operationalise the oversight necessary for the management of a fund of this scale. While the importance of the topic is clearly highlighted, there is also no direct reference to the concept of **wellbeing economy** is made. However, elements point to it, such as referrals to investments and transformations that are “in line with the needs of the population and the limits of the planet”.

The **EPHA manifesto** calls more specifically for a strengthening of health systems, particularly through a dedicated and ambitious EU health budget, stressing 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. To strengthen health systems, the health and care workforce crisis should also be addressed.

## Health workforce

The manifesto does not make direct reference to the **health workforce**, and the current **shortages** and challenges that it is facing. However, it mentions **care workers**, underlining the fact that they are mostly women, and expressing the commitment to fight “for socially and financially decent work for women”. The manifesto also foresees “direct financing to the states to strengthen public institutions and bodies”, which could mean more **investments** in public health systems and therefore better **conditions and training** for the workforce. Furthermore, it proposes to “create a European Fund for public services, financed at 0% by the ECB, with democratic governance, for investment, massive recruitment and training, particularly in [...] health [...]”. Other measures, although not specific to health and care workers, presented in the manifesto could be beneficial. These include an amendment to “the Working Time Directive with the aim of reducing working hours for the same wage” and “an EU regulation guaranteeing the legal right to permanent contracts and full-time work”. Finally, the manifesto plans “to redirect production towards social and environmental needs”, which could entail measures to ensure better working conditions and training to address current challenges and skills needs.

The workers’ measures proposed will provide elements supporting the health and care workforce in the challenges they are facing. However, more targeted measures are also needed to fully grasp those challenges and reflect the urgency of the situation. The challenges of the workforce are often referred to as a “ticking time bomb”, and the issue has gained momentum on the EU political agenda, with the Bucharest Declaration and the current Belgian Presidency of the Council.

On this matter, the **EPHA manifesto** has focused on addressing the shortages and medical deserts issues, calling it a priority for the next mandate. Measures would include tools for long-term planning, guidelines on mobility, and improving working conditions, particularly on the workers' health and mental health. EPHA also calls for investments in education and continuous professional development, meeting to point on skills needs.

## Antimicrobial resistance

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

Conversely, 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** is insufficiently addressed in the manifesto. Indeed, while on multiple occasions it mentions research, it never specifically refers to health. The manifesto also takes a clear position against the "privatisation of [...] research" and shares the intention of only allowing "public funding for public institutions". As concrete proposals, it requests to "reserve 7% of EU GDP for education, research, and innovation" and to "create a European Fund for public services, financed at 0% by the ECB, with democratic governance, for investment, massive recruitment and training, particularly in [...] research [...]". However, **Horizon Europe**, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation is not mentioned. Finally, the manifesto foresees the "allocation of European study and research grants" depending on "social criteria promoting European exchanges in training courses from secondary to university level".

Research and innovation are key assets in the context of multicrisis that the EU is facing, and on advancing on the fight against health threats, NCDs, AMR and more. There is a need for stronger measures that are specific to health. However, while the manifesto addresses the topic of research with some concrete measures, it does not specifically refer to research in health.

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 manifesto addresses many of the key topics related to health and proposes some concrete measures. The equity dimension is extensively addressed, constituting a central pillar in the manifesto. The transition to green economies is also quite highlighted, although the topic could have been tackled with more detail. In this context, special attention is given to the need to achieve a just transition. The manifesto fails to address mental health and NCDs, even though the latter are a key and growing health issue to be tackled in the next mandate. It also fails to address AMR, one of the top global public health threats. Similarly, access to medicines and the healthcare workforce shortages, two important current issues, are also barely touched upon. Overall, the feasibility of some of the measures should also be assessed.



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