# Overarching Manifesto Analysis

## 1. Executive summary

The European elections of 6-9 June 2024 offer a turning point for EU health policies. A number of health issues need to be addressed, such as the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), antimicrobial resistance (AMR), or mental health. Health systems were in crisis before the COVID-19 pandemic, a situation that has worsened as a consequence of their chronic underfunding. Moreover, health and care workforce shortages, exacerbated by difficult working conditions and an overall workforce crisis have been described as a ticking time bomb. Furthermore, the growing impacts of climate change on health, and of unhealthy environments on health, show a clear need to break policy silos and act urgently. The question is how much attention are those standing for election giving these vital issues?

In that regard, EPHA has analysed the programmes of European parties, to provide a picture of what should be expected in terms of health measures, and how these challenges should be expected to be addressed in the next mandate. EPHA has identified sixteen topics for this analysis:

- **Public health as a priority**
- **Institutional elements**
- **Sustainable Food Systems**
- **Non-Communicable Diseases**
- **Mental health**
- **Health equity**
- **Access to care**
- **Digital transformation**
- **Environment and health**
- **Climate change adaptation and mitigation**
- **Commitment to global and multilateral initiatives**
- **Health crisis preparedness**
- **Resilience of health systems**
- **Health workforce**
- **Antimicrobial resistance**
- **Research in health**

The manifestos of five main European parties were analysed, in comparison to EU objectives and commitments (Sustainable Development Goals, Global Health Strategy objectives, Farm to Fork and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan's targets, 8th Environmental Action Plan). The five manifestos analysed were from European People's Party (EPP), the Party of European Socialists (PES), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), the European Green Party (EGP) and the European Left (EL). The measures assessed were sorted depending on whether the topic was lacking ("red" category) insufficient to meet EU goals ("orange" category), or addressed ("green" category). Additional elements relevant to public health were also mapped.

In addition, in this overarching report, the later manifestos of other European parties such as European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), European Free Alliance (EFA), Volt, European Democrats (EDP), European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) were considered.

Looking at the five manifestos, trends can be observed, with topics at risk of being completely left out (i.e., healthcare workforce crisis), other presenting insufficient ambition (i.e., food systems, NCDs), or topics that are well addressed (i.e., equity). Overall, health is present in the manifestos, but not always given a strong priority. This reflects what could be a concerning picture for health in the next mandate.

EPHA has defined 10 key priorities in its manifesto, "Strengthening Public Health Across the European Union", published in November 2023. Overall, the five manifestos align to the EPHA manifesto only to some extent. The priorities are somewhat addressed in the content of the political parties' programmes, but often lack focus on health promotion, prevention, or impacts on health.

This analysis contains elements to consider when approaching the next Parliamentary term, particularly in terms of context, and of ongoing policy files that must remain on the agenda, but risk being dropped. Then, the document proposes a snapshot of what the next mandate could look like in terms of health policies. This also includes insights from additional European manifestos. It then suggests a deeper dive in the proposals of the five analysed manifestos, by providing a cross-analysis through the lens of the sixteen defined topics. Finally, the report also proposes a comparison with the priorities defined in the EPHA manifesto, calling for health to be placed high on the EU agenda. Finally, a table summarises the findings of the analysis. The table below provides a shorter synthesis.

## Table 1. Summary of the findings

| Topic | EPP | ALDE | PES | EGP | Left | Examples of key proposals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Public health as a priority** | 🟩 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | EGP: Green and Social Deal |
| **Institutional elements** | 🟩 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | EGP: EU civil society protection mechanism<br>Left: European Fund for public services |
| **Sustainable Food Systems** | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | EGP: Plant-Based Treaty; Common Food and Agriculture Policy; |
| **Non-Communicable Diseases** | 🟩 | 🟥 | 🟥 | 🟧 | 🟥 | EPP: European plan to address Alzheimer's disease, dementia and Parkinson's disease; European Cardiovascular Health Plan; implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan |
| **Mental health** | 🟩 | 🟥 | 🟩 | 🟧 | 🟥 | EPP: EU Action Plan for Mental Health<br>PES: European Mental Health Strategy |
| **Health equity** | 🟩 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | EPP: New Pact for intergenerational fairness; European Guarantee for older citizens; strengthen the EU strategy for Outermost Regions; strengthen the European Care Strategy<br><br>ALDE: 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<br><br>PES: EU Strategy on Age Equality; European Anti-Discrimination Directive; European Plan for Affordable Housing; EU Strategy for Combatting Homelessness; full implementation of the European Child Guarantee; implementation of the EU Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; reinforce the EU's strategies for Gender Equality and for LGBTIQ Equality; push for the adoption of Directive on gender-based violence<br><br>EGP: Green and Social Deal; Care Deal; "Affordable Housing EU" plan; integrated anti-poverty Strategy; framework directive on minimum income; Climate Adaptation Law; revision of the Work Life Balance Directive and the Maternity Leave Directive; update of the Horizontal Anti-discrimination Directive; renewed LGBTQIA+ Equality Strategy; expanded European Solidarity Fund; Just Transition Law<br><br>Left: 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 'feminicide' 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 |

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| Topic | EPP | ALDE | PES | EGP | Left | Examples of key proposals |
|-------|-----|------|-----|-----|------|---------------------------|
| **Access to care** | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟧 | EGP: EU legislation for a Universal Health Coverage |
| **Digital transformation** | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟥 | EPP: European Workers' Guarantee for the Digital Market (not health specific)<br>EGP: Digital Fairness Act |
| **Environment and health** | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟧 | EPP: implementation of the Net-Zero Industry Act and the Critical Raw Materials Act<br>ALDE: European strategy for the bioeconomy; a pan-European rail network<br>EGP: Green and Social Deal; revision of the Green Taxonomy; Just Transition Law<br>Left: implementation of the Sustainable Mobility Directive; changes in the banking policy of the ECB to foster green investments |
| **Climate change adaptation and mitigation** | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟧 | EPP: implementation of the Net-Zero Industry Act and the Critical Raw Materials Act<br>ALDE: expand the scope of the European Emissions Trading System (ETS)<br>EGP: Green and Social Deal; Global Green Deal; European Climate Ticket framework; revision of the Green Taxonomy; Just Transition Law |
| **Commitment to global and multilateral initiatives** | 🟥 | 🟥 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟩 | |
| **Health crisis preparedness** | 🟩 | 🟥 | 🟧 | 🟩 | 🟧 | EGP: EU Health Force |
| **Resilience of health systems** | 🟧 | 🟥 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟩 | |
| **Health workforce** | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟧 | 🟥 | 🟧 | EPP: European Workers' Guarantee for the Digital Market (not health specific)<br>ALDE: Revision of the mutual recognition of professional qualifications (not health specific)<br>EGP: EU Right to Disconnect; Right to Remote Work (not health specific) |
| **Antimicrobial resistance** | 🟥 | 🟥 | 🟩 | 🟩 | 🟥 | |
| **Research in health** | 🟩 | 🟥 | 🟩 | 🟥 | 🟧 | |
| **Other (treaties changes)** | 🟢 | 🟢 | 🟢 | 🟢 | 🟢 | |