

# 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, 8<sup>th</sup> 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
<b>Public health as a priority</b>	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	<u>EGP</u> : Green and Social Deal
<b>Institutional elements</b>	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	<u>EGP</u> : EU civil society protection mechanism <u>Left</u> : European Fund for public services
<b>Sustainable Food Systems</b>	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	<u>EGP</u> : Plant-Based Treaty; Common Food and Agriculture Policy;
<b>Non-Communicable Diseases</b>	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	<u>EPP</u> : European plan to address Alzheimer’s disease, dementia and Parkinson’s disease; European Cardiovascular Health Plan; implementation of Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan
<b>Mental health</b>	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Red	<u>EPP</u> : EU Action Plan for Mental Health <u>PES</u> : European Mental Health Strategy
<b>Health equity</b>	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	<u>EPP</u> : New Pact for intergenerational fairness; European Guarantee for older citizens; strengthen the EU strategy for Outermost Regions; strengthen the European Care Strategy <u>ALDE</u> : 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 <u>PES</u> : 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 <u>EGP</u> : 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 <u>Left</u> : 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

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

## 2. The EU 2024 elections: the risk of an implementation gap at a turning point

The next mandate of the European Parliament and European Commission offers a turning point. It will follow a mandate where health was urgently placed on the agenda, in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on our societies and health systems. The crisis also pushed the EU to establish a European Health Union, that now needs to be further developed, which is referred to in some of the manifestos. Furthermore, coordination on vaccines and on crisis management was key during the pandemic, as was the creation of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (DG HERA), a new Directorate General within the European Commission. The mandate has also seen key achievements, such as Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the European Health Data Space, together with calls for an initiative on mental health.

However, health systems are in crisis, particularly looking at the workforce situation, labelled a ticking time bomb. Challenges such as climate change are having an increasingly dire impact on health, equity, and mental health. Furthermore, non-communicable diseases present an increasing burden on the health of EU citizens, and on their health systems. It is therefore crucial that the next mandate provides an adequate level of ambition for health policies and details how they are to be delivered. Expectations to invest in health systems and crisis preparedness, and provide stronger EU health budget will rest on the newly elected or re-elected MEPs.

Legacies from the Spanish and Belgian EU Presidencies should be taken up in the next mandate, the latter having provided a strong focus on health and on the healthcare workforce. The Spanish Presidency also committed through an informal ministerial meeting to "boosting the European Health Union", in order to tackle future health crises and improve healthcare across the EU, learning from COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>

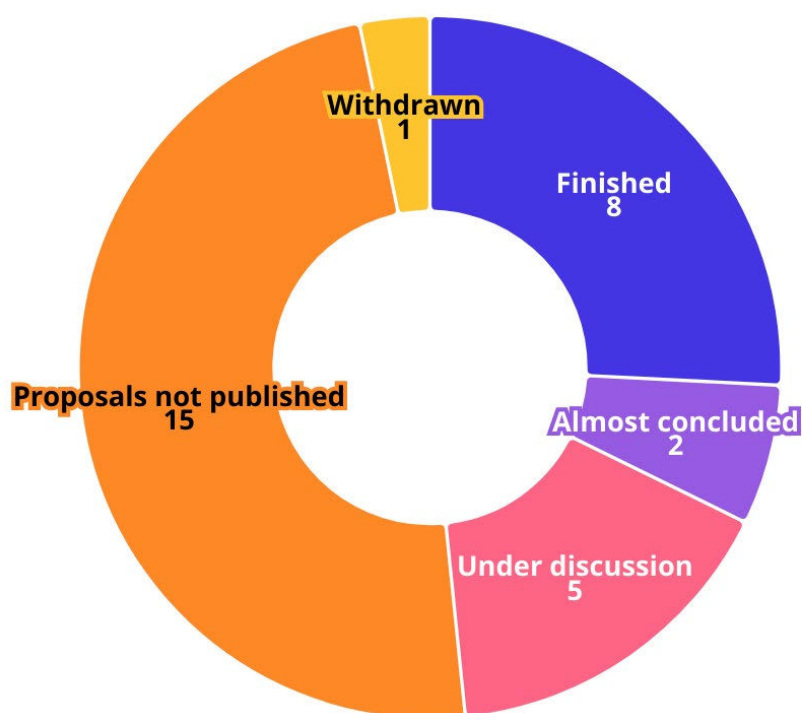
However, the reality shows that health is at risk of losing its importance on the agenda and for some topics to be left out, or dropped between the two mandates. A key example would be the food policy commitments of the current European Commission. Indeed, Farm to Fork has been delayed and has overall been impacted by a backlash on environmental policies<sup>2</sup>. The strategy aims at making food systems more sustainable, tackling production, distribution and consumption. Euronews has estimated in February 2024 that over half of the promises from this agenda were still unmet, and that they were unlikely to be met in the future, as they were slowly replaced by a strategic dialogue agenda on farming. It was estimated that more than two thirds of the strategy is likely to remain unfinished before the next European Commission is set. For instance, the Sustainable Food Law remains absent, and the Food Information to Consumers legislation is on hold.

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<sup>1</sup> Spanish Presidency of the Council (2023). Health leaders of the EU pledge to make progress in building the European Health Union. Available at: <https://spanish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/informal-ministerial-meeting-epsco-health-28-july-las-palmas/>

<sup>2</sup> Euronews (2024). EU Policy. Over half of von der Leyen's food policy promises weren't met, analysis shows. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/02/19/over-half-of-von-der-leyens-food-policy-promises-werent-met-analysis-shows>

Figure 1. State of play - Farm to Fork (Euronews)<sup>3</sup>



Source: Euronews elaboration based on Commission data



Another concerning issue is the potential lack of budget for health at the EU level in the next mandate. Following the **EUR 1 billion redeployment** from the EU4Health budget voted in February, concerns on the priority given to health have already been extensively expressed. However, recently, it was mentioned that the programme, or rather its funding, was not likely to be repeated in the next multi-annual financial framework.<sup>4</sup> This would result in much lower ambition of the EU on health, but it would also mainly show that the lessons from COVID-19 were not learnt, especially in terms of preparedness and resilience of health systems, that are in a dire situation.

In contrast, and according to a recent Eurobarometer, health is quite high in the EU citizens' priorities ahead of the elections. Indeed, the fight against poverty and social exclusion (33%) and supporting public health (32%) are the top topics that citizens would like to see in the elections' discussions.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, there are expectations for the upcoming mandate, which might not be met. Some of these risks can also be observed in the content of the manifestos.

<sup>3</sup> Euronews (2024). EU Policy. Over half of von der Leyen's food policy promises weren't met, analysis shows. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/02/19/over-half-of-von-der-leyen-food-policy-promises-werent-met-analysis-shows>

<sup>4</sup> Euronews (2024). EU Policy. Bloc's health budget facing uncertain future – EU official. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/health/2024/05/15/blocs-health-budget-facing-uncertain-future-eu-official>

<sup>5</sup> Eurobarometer (2024). EP Spring 2024 Survey: Use your vote - Countdown to the European elections. Available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3272>

## 3. Lessons from the manifestos

### 3.1 Expectations for the 2024 mandate

As presented above, the context and challenges the EU is facing calls for strong action on public health, and for the issue to be placed at the top of the EU agenda. However, looking at recent developments and at the content of the manifestos, some health topics and issues are at risk of disappearing from the agenda, or not be given the necessary priority and ambition.

The **published** EU strategic agenda for 2024-2029 does not refer to health, nor environment. It has a few elements on climate, but overall, the focus is rather on defence, security, and migration.<sup>6</sup> Somewhat ironic given that Council President Charles Michel himself lists the pandemic as one of the motivations for elaborating the strategy. This would present a mismatch with the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, that would require stronger support to health systems to ensure their resilience. It would also be a mismatch with the dire impacts from climate change that are arising.

Similar concerns could be shared on some of the analysed topics in the manifestos, and on some of the current or recent EU files. Overall, health is present in most manifestos, but is quite absent from ALDE's. Some topics are overall insufficient or lacking, which could lead to potential gaps in EU health policies. This includes NCDs (with the exception of the EPP) and their prevention, antimicrobial resistance (with the exception of PES and EGP), mental health (except EPP and PES), but also research, digital transformation of health systems, and the resilience of health systems, particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19. The question of the health and care workforce is also quite absent, which shows a striking difference with the priority that it has been given through the Belgian Presidency.

Some crucial EU files were not mentioned in the manifestos. Farm to Fork is remarkably absent, even though some elements proposed could contribute to its objectives. Recent achievements of the EU, such as the Global Health Strategy, or the European Health Data Space, were mentioned by none of the manifestos, while the implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is only mentioned by the EPP. Finally, the Pharma Package and the Ambient Air Quality Directive are also lacking from all manifestos. This could put into question their implementation, and the impact it would have on public health at the EU level and within the Member States.

Some other elements were covered, but more would be needed to reach the necessary ambition. This is overall the case of health, and of the learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also the case of food systems, with a focus on food security and agriculture, but less on healthy foods, overall. Finally, environment and climate overall are addressed, but seem to often lack a connection with health. The Green Deal is absent from the ALDE manifesto, and its implementation is not fully addressed in the EPP manifesto. Some elements were overall well developed, such as the institutional changes that would be required following an enlargement of the EU membership. This also includes calls for stronger EU competences on environmental, social and health policies in some manifestos (EGP, PES). Equity is also overall well covered in the manifestos.

### 3.2 Manifestos published later and reviewed more briefly

To provide a bigger picture for this analysis, other European manifestos have been considered. The European Free Alliance (EFA) manifesto (part of the political group of the Greens in the European Parliament) does not address public health. It does refer to some of the analysed topics, with brief elements on antidiscrimination, equity, and gender equity. It also stresses the need to implement the Green Deal, but calls for a stronger decentralisation of the process. It mentions elements on farming, and calls for a just transition leaving no community behind. It also relates to EU enlargement. Overall, the manifesto provides a strong local dimension.

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<sup>6</sup> Politico (2024). "Bullets not bees: EU ditches green focus ahead of June election". Available at: [https://www.politico.eu/article/leaked-eu-priority-list-reveals-absence-climate-change-focus/?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=alert&utm\\_campaign=Bullets%20not%20bees%3A%20EU%20ditches%20green%20focus%20ahead%20of%20June%20election](https://www.politico.eu/article/leaked-eu-priority-list-reveals-absence-climate-change-focus/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=alert&utm_campaign=Bullets%20not%20bees%3A%20EU%20ditches%20green%20focus%20ahead%20of%20June%20election)

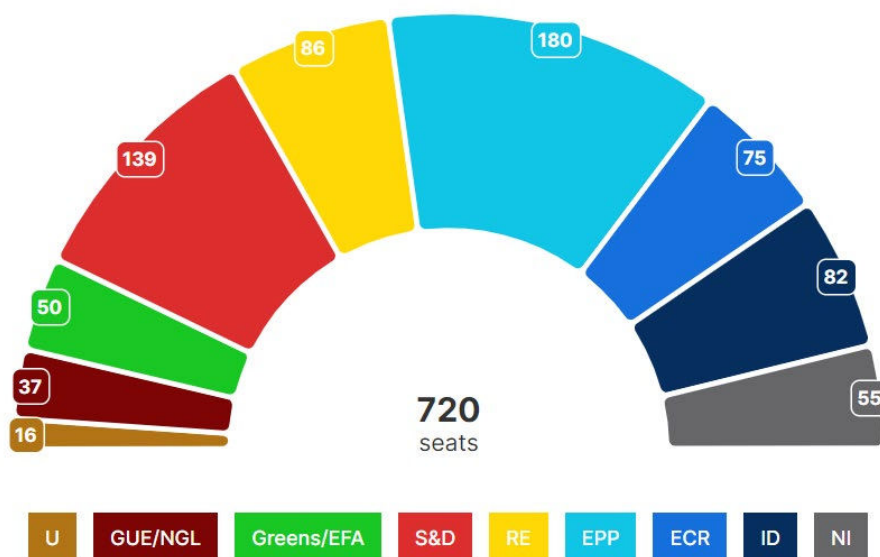
Volt's programme is on the other hand very comprehensive, calls to strengthen European public health with prevention measures, and covers most of the analysed topics in a very thorough manner. The programme includes a European Constitution proposal, with calls for a more federal Europe. It contains several measures for the environment and climate, such as a net zero economy by 2040, clean energy, a Green Net GDP, and calls for wellbeing and beyond GDP to be considered. It contains a vision that encapsulates the different crises and challenges the EU is facing, including health threats. It also proposes a comprehensive Pandemic Accord and pandemic prevention, preparedness and response measures. It also commits to the SDGs, Paris Agreement, Fit for 55 and Green Deal. Some elements focus on the workforce shortages, and calls for human-centred digital systems in healthcare. The manifesto also tackles healthy and sustainable diets. The document has a comprehensive equity angle. Finally, it covers One Health and AMR.

The European Democratic Party (EDP, sitting with the Renew Europe Group in the European Parliament), also provides quite a comprehensive view and covers several health-related topics. This includes a priority on healthcare, with a patient-centred healthcare and calls for improved cross-border healthcare and cooperation with health NGOs. The manifesto stresses the need to provide adequate funding for common public goods, including environment and health. It also provides elements on equity, or a call for a "pragmatic and inclusive" digital transition. Food systems are also covered, with elements on environmentally-friendly agriculture, food sovereignty, and information on food production.

Then, the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM, sitting with the EPP and ECR political groups in the European Parliament) manifesto does not address public health in a way that would support EU objectives. It provides limited input on topics related to health, with a perspective that could be detrimental to public health, particularly regarding sexual and reproductive rights as well as vaccination.

Finally, the European Conservative and Reformists Party's manifesto was analysed, but overall does not address health in a way that would advance public health, and promotes an "opposite approach" to the Green Deal. Identity and Democracy did not publish a manifesto. However, current polls project that these two groups could occupy 157 seats (ECR 75, ID 82) undermining the potential for health to be dealt with the priority it requires next term.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 2. Forecast (May 1st, Euronews)<sup>8</sup>**



<sup>7</sup> Euronews (2024). Euronews Polls Centre. Available at: <https://polls.euronews.com/?view=graph&menu=polls&loaded-analyses=3&loaded-polls=3&loaded-news=4>

<sup>8</sup> Euronews (2024). Euronews Polls Centre. Available at: <https://polls.euronews.com/?view=graph&menu=polls&loaded-analyses=3&loaded-polls=3&loaded-news=4>



### 3.3 Topics analysed for their coverage in the different manifestos

The analysis focused on 16 different topics, that were defined through the priorities identified in the EPHA manifesto. These are the current public health issues and key challenges that need to be addressed by the EU. They were also assessed by considering ongoing EU and international commitments, such as the SDGs, Paris Agreement, EU Global Health Strategy, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, Green Deal, Fit for 55, Farm to Fork, or the 8<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Plan.

#### Public health as a priority



*Although in none of the analysed manifestos public health is explicitly put as a priority, most of them address it in a more or less developed manner. The ALDE manifesto is the only one out of the five party manifestos analysed which stands out for insufficiently addressing health.*

**Mentions and proposals related to public health and wellbeing<sup>9</sup>** can be spotted in the manifestos of the European People's Party (EPP), Party of European Socialists (PES), European Green Party (EGP) and European Left. ALDE proposes only a few elements and planned measures that would support public health. A **health prevention and promotion** vision can only be observed in EGP and PES, although not explicitly mentioned, while EPP addresses it only in a very limited way. It is left out from the manifestos of ALDE and the European Left. A (stronger) European Health Union is mentioned in many of the manifestos (PES, EPP, EGP).

The need for a **health in all policies approach** is explicitly mentioned only in the EGP manifesto. PES hints at it by highlighting the importance of synergy between different policies. EPP, ALDE and European Left do not address it.

The need for a stronger **EU budget for health** is omitted from all the manifestos. While EGP gives some considerations to increasing the EU budget, it does not specify health. EPP only mentions investments in health research and innovation, but with no reference to the health budget.

#### Institutional elements



*Most manifestos include elements regarding the EU institutional setting and its competences that could be linked to further action on public health. Some more, some less. However, ALDE insufficiently addresses the topic.*

PES and EPP include elements that could have an impact on public health. The first calls for a stronger role of EU institutions, while the second calls for a Vice-President of the European Commission with an overarching role in addressing demographic change and its challenges, including in healthcare. A **European Health Union** is mentioned in many of the manifestos (PES, EPP, EGP), with EPP and PES calling for its strengthening. However, the **SANT Committee** in the European Parliament is mentioned in none of the manifestos.

<sup>9</sup> Goals and priorities searched in this topic include: Priorities - GHS - (1) Deliver better health and well-being of people across the life course; Goals - SDGs - 3: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



While all the parties mention **treaty changes**, the European Left proposes institutional changes that explicitly refer to health. Stronger EU competence in health is also mentioned by EGP. Most parties (EPP, PES, EGP, ALDE) also mention a possible EU enlargement.

All manifestos include elements relating to the role of **civil society**. In particular, EGP calls for their adequate funding, and EPP for accelerating funding procedures.

## Sustainable Food Systems



*The topic of sustainable food systems is addressed in sufficient details by PES, EGP and European Left. However, EPP and ALDE provide insufficient elements, with EPP focusing mainly on the farming aspect.*

A number of topics were expected when analysing the topic of Sustainable Food Systems. Legislative elements such as the Sustainable Food Systems Framework, Farm to Fork were searched, but not mentioned. Farm to Fork targets and SDGs were also looked for.<sup>10</sup> Issues such as labelling, dietary patterns, healthy food, food security, were expected, but not always covered.

Many parties address the topic of food systems from an agriculture point of view. These include EPP mainly, but also PES and ALDE. The latter, indeed, addresses the topic focusing on agriculture and sustainability. Sustainability is emphasised by PES, EGP, ALDE and European Left. Specifically, EGP calls for a Common Food and Agricultural Policy, to ensure sustainability.

**Healthy food** is mainly mentioned in the manifestos of PES, EPP and European Left, with PES and EPP also touching upon its affordability. EGP includes a few elements. ALDE, on the other hand, only mentions affordable food. **Food security** is also mentioned in all manifestos with different extents. While ALDE and European Left only hint at it, PES, EPP, and especially EGP, address it. The link with climate change is made especially in the PES and European Left manifestos.

**Dietary patterns, food and alcohol labelling, and commercial determinants of health** are lacking in most manifestos. Only the EGP refers to the need of more plant-based diets.

Regarding **pesticides** and their use in agriculture, EGP quite strongly addresses it. PES and ALDE only mention reducing their use.

## Non-Communicable Diseases



*Only EPP addresses the topic of non-communicable diseases, focusing on several distinct diseases. The topic is mainly missing from the manifestos of PES, ALDE, EGP and European Left.*

Non-communicable diseases are a growing burden of ill health in the EU. It is therefore paramount to take legislative action, promote prevention and address risk factors and **commercial determinants of**

<sup>10</sup> 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; Targets - Farm to Fork - reduce the use of fertilizers by 20% by 2030; Goals - SDG 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; 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; Indicator - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - Area under organic farming (% of utilised agricultural area in km<sup>2</sup>); Target - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - 25% of EU agricultural land organically farmed by 2030.

**health.** In addition to these elements, targets from Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan<sup>11</sup> were searched, as well as the question of smoke-free environments. The latter, as well as the Beating Cancer Plan targets, were neither mentioned nor addressed in the manifestos.

While the EPP manifesto proposes specific measures to address non-communicable diseases, it does not clearly address the question of **prevention** and of **risk factors**. EPP proposals include a European plan to address Alzheimer’s disease, dementia and Parkinson’s disease and a European Cardiovascular Health Plan. The EGP briefly mentions non-communicable diseases, but does not provide specific proposals in their regard. The issue is then lacking from the PES, ALDE and Left manifestos.

## Mental health



*Mental health is addressed by EPP and PES. Although both parties propose respectively an action plan and a dedicated strategy, EPP is more articulate. On the other hand, EGP addresses the topic insufficiently, and ALDE and European Left fail to mention it at all.*

Mental health has gained importance on the EU agenda in the past mandate. To analyse this topic, mentions of the issue, of a focus on youth mental health, of suicide prevention or of a legislative proposal were searched. A target from SDG 3<sup>12</sup> was also considered.

While EPP and PES both propose concrete measures to address **mental health**, they do not mention specific targets or priority groups. EGP also hints at mental health with a brief mention. Respectively, the EPP calls for an Action Plan on Mental Health, while PES proposes an EU Strategy. **Suicide prevention** is also left out of the picture from all manifestos.

## Health equity



*Health equity is well addressed in most manifestos. It is significantly developed by PES and EGP, with elements on energy poverty, gender equity and anti-discrimination. EPP has several relevant elements, with a focus on age, while equity is visible throughout the European Left manifesto. It is also developed by ALDE, but in a more limited way.*

Health equity refers to a number of policy areas: antidiscrimination and antiracism; poverty in all its forms; inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups; social and economic determinants of health; just transition; gender equity; and overall equity. Elements from the SDGs were expected to be referred to.<sup>13</sup>

The only parties directly referring to **health** in this section are EPP and EGP. While the former mentions “reducing health inequalities” as a “core mission of the EU”, the latter expresses a commitment to “eliminate health inequities”.

<sup>11</sup> Targets - EBCP - Alcohol Strategy - Alcohol warning labels, ingredients, nutritional values, marketing, taxation; Targets - EBCP - Tobacco Free Generation - less than 5% of the population using tobacco by 2040; Targets - EBCP - Papillomaviruses - aim to vaccinate at least 90% of the EU target population of girls and to significantly increase the vaccination of boys by 2030

<sup>12</sup> Targets - SDG 3 - Target 3.4 is: By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being. Within Target 3.4, suicide rate is an indicator (3.4.2).

<sup>13</sup> Goals - SDGs - 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; Goals - SDGs - 5: achieve gender equality; Goals - SDGs - 10: reduce inequality within and among countries; Goals - SDG - 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Concerning inequalities and **discrimination**, EGP, PES and European Left are particularly strong. ALDE has relevant content, proposing concrete measures, but it mainly focuses on LGBTI+ rights and gender equity. EPP puts a strong emphasis on seniors. Regarding **racism**, EGP is the only party presenting concrete measures to counter it. Out of all five parties, the need for better **data on inequalities** is only mentioned by EGP.

All manifestos quite strongly address the **gender question**. However, compared to the others, the EPP manifesto presents fewer concrete measures. PES and European Left show a more holistic approach, with an intention of integrating a gender perspective in all policies. All manifestos address the issue of gender-based violence. Most of them address the economic aspect of gender equality, with ALDE being the only exception. The topic of care work is mentioned by PES, European Left and ALDE. Sexual reproductive health and rights are addressed by ALDE, EGP and European Left.

Regarding the topics of **poverty** and **housing**, the ALDE manifesto stands out for not addressing them. Several aspects of poverty, including energy poverty, are significantly addressed by PES and EGP. On the other hand, the European Left only mentions energy poverty, and EPP does not mention it at all. PES, EGP and European Left stand out for their measures on housing.

## Access to care

“ *Access to care is well developed in the PES manifesto, with a focus on supply of medicines and fair pricing. EGP also provides relevant elements, while the topic is more generally addressed in the EPP and European Left manifestos. It is quite limited in the ALDE one.* ”

When assessing access to care, the question of medicine shortages was looked for in the manifestos, as well as references to the Pharma Package or to universal health coverage<sup>14</sup>.

All manifestos mention **access to care** for all, except for the ALDE's one, which only addresses access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. The universal dimension is explicitly mentioned by PES, EGP (calling for a **universal health coverage**) and European Left.

None of the manifestos mention the EU's **Pharmaceutical package**, and only a few include considerations linked to **access to medicines**. PES addresses medicines shortages, while EPP only hints at it, and EGP only refers to the affordability of medicines.

## Digital transformation

“ *Digital transformation is overall addressed in the different manifestos, but is lacking focus on healthcare systems (EGP, EPP, PES, ALDE). In some cases, the topic is not developed in detail (European Left).* ”

Following the adoption of the European Health Data Space, its implementation will require measures on the digitalisation of health systems. In analysing this topic, elements such as digital inclusion, digital divide, digital health literacy, data protection, e-health were searched. This also included any references to the AI Act, coverage of telemedicine or the opt-in/opt-out mechanisms of the EHDS; however, these were not covered in the manifesto.

<sup>14</sup> Priorities - GHS - (2) Strengthen health systems and advance universal health coverage; Targets - SDG1 - 1.3. Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

All manifestos fail to bring a health dimension to the topic of the digital transition. Although EGP mentions a European Data Space, no party mentions the **European Health Data Space**, a current key file in EU health policy. Similarly, **telemedicine**, **e-Health**, **digital health tools** and **health literacy** are lacking in all manifestos.

Digital inclusion is mentioned in the PES, EPP, EGP and ALDE manifestos. European Left touches upon it with a focus on a few specific targets. A **digital divide** is only mentioned by ALDE and EPP. **Digital literacy and skills** are present in the ALDE and PES manifestos.

The topic of **AI** is more developed in the PES and EGP manifestos, while in the EPP, ALDE and European Left ones it is only hinted at. Regarding the **protection of data**, EGP addresses it, while EPP and ALDE only mention it.

## Environment and health



*EGP and PES provide a vision that considers health and the environment together, even though PES insufficiently address clean air. EPP addresses environment, but without a sufficient link to health. ALDE and the European Left provide general elements.*

This section focused on the impacts of pollution on health, cleaner transports, and overall impacts of environmental degradation. Targets from the Green Deal, SDGs and the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP were looked for.<sup>15</sup>

In their manifestos, PES, EGP and European Left provide elements that align with a **One Health** approach.

EGP strongly addresses the topic of **air quality**, also mentioning fine particulate matter and premature death. EPP mentions air quality and European Left only touches upon it. However, none mention the **Ambient Air Quality Directive**. However, together with EGP's, the EPP manifesto strongly emphasizes **emissions** and electrifying fleet transport. **Sustainable transport** and emissions are also addressed by European Left and ALDE. The PES manifesto is insufficient on these issues. The phasing out of **fossil fuels** is mentioned in all manifestos, with EGP and European Left proposing specific measures.

The promotion of a **circular economy** is mentioned by most parties with the exception of European Left. **Pollution**, including the **polluter pays principle**, is addressed in the EGP and PES manifestos, with EGP strongly emphasizing a zero-pollution policy. ALDE addresses the polluter pays principle as well, while

<sup>15</sup> Targets - Green Deal - reduction of emissions from cars by 55% by 2030; Targets - Green Deal - 0 emissions from new cars by 2035; Goals - SDGs - 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goals - SDG - 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goals - SDGs - 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; 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; 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; Indicator - 8th EAP 2.2.d - Premature deaths due to exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) (number of premature deaths); Target - 8th EAP 2.2.d - Reduce premature deaths from air pollution by 55% (from 2005 levels) by 2030; 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; Indicator - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Share of environmental taxes in total tax revenues (in %); Target - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Making polluters pay: increase the share of environmental taxes in total revenues from taxes and social contributions; Indicator - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Fossil fuel subsidies (EUR million); 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; Indicator - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Environmental protection expenditure (EUR billion and % GDP); 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; Indicator - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Green bonds (% of total bonds issued); Target - 8th EAP - Art 3 - Sustainable investments: increase the issuance of green bonds to boost public and private financing for green investments; 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; Target - 8th EAP - 2.1 - Reduce water scarcity.

European Left only touches upon the topic of pollution. The EPP manifesto contains elements that could be deemed opposite to the polluter pays principle and to environmental taxes. Regarding **waste**, it is addressed by EPP, ALDE and EGP, while the latter stands out by taking a zero-waste approach. PES and European Left do not mention the topic.

**Water policy** is mentioned by all parties except for ALDE. The EPP manifesto brings further measures on droughts. While all manifestos mention **biodiversity**, only EGP provides measures to address the topic.

Only one manifesto brings an additional element that was not foreseen in our analytical framework, and which could bring a positive impact on environmental policy. Indeed, the ALDE manifesto calls to empower the European Environmental Agency to foster consistent implementation of environmental standards across the Union.

## Climate change adaptation and mitigation



*Climate change is addressed in an uneven way in the manifestos. EGP provides a strong approach, with a proposal of a Global Green Deal. The topic is also well addressed by PES. The Green Deal seems to have a lower level of ambition compared to its current one in the EPP manifesto, while ALDE does not mention it. The European Left focuses mainly on just transition.*

When analysing climate, the analysis looked at considerations for the impacts on health, and commitments to the Green Deal, Paris Agreement and SDGs<sup>16</sup>. Elements on energy and just transition were also searched.

The EGP manifesto stands out for referring and committing to the climate objectives of all **international agreements** included in our analytical framework. It also calls for a Green and Social Deal, as well as a Global Green Deal. On the other hand, the manifesto of European Left stands out for insufficiently addressing those, that of ALDE for not mentioning the Green Deal, and that of EPP for the level of ambition presented and how it compares with what is required for the full implementation of the Green Deal. In the PES manifesto, climate measures align with the Paris Agreement and the Green Deal.

On the topic of **energy, renewable energies and energy efficiency**, EGP emerges for strongly addressing it, while European Left does for barely doing so. EPP, PES and ALDE provide some relevant elements.

A strong just **transition vision** can be found in the manifestos of PES, EGP and European Left. In that of EPP, it is hinted at, while in the ALDE manifesto it is insufficiently addressed. Measures to address **environmental inequalities** are lacking in all five manifestos.

<sup>16</sup> Targets - Green Deal - 42.5% renewable energy target for 2030; Targets - Green Deal - 11.7% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030; Mention of Fit for 55; 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; Targets - Fit for 55 - reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030; Targets - Green Deal - no net emission of greenhouse gases by 2050; Goals - SDG - 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; Goal - SDGs - 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; 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; Indicator - 8th EAP 2.2.a - Greenhouse gas emission (GHG, index 1990=100, tonnes of CO2 equivalent); Target - 8th EAP 2.2.a - Reduce net GHG emissions by at least 55% by 2030 from 1990 levels; 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; Indicator - 8th EAP 2.2.b - Drought impact on ecosystems (area affected in km<sup>2</sup>); Target - 8th EAP 2.2.b - Decrease the area impacted by drought and loss of vegetation productivity; 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; Indicator - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - Energy consumption (in million tonnes of oil equivalent); 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; Indicator - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption (in %); Target - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - At least 42.5% of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption by 2030; Target - 8th EAP - 2.2.f - Increase the share of collective transport modes (buses, coaches and trains); Indicator - 8th EAP - 2.1 - Environmental inequalities; Target - 8th EAP - 2.1 - Reduce environmental inequalities and ensure a fair transition.

On the topic of **adaptation to weather-related events**, the EPP manifesto stands out for addressing it with a key measure in terms of civil protection mechanisms in times of crisis.

Overall, the impacts on health were insufficiently developed.

## Commitment to global and multilateral initiatives



*Several manifestos align with and commit to multilateral initiatives such as the SDGs (European Left, PES, EGP). However, the topic is lacking from the EPP and ALDE manifestos.*

In this part, references to commitments of the EU on the international stage were assessed. This included searches for mentions of the Global Health Strategy<sup>17</sup>, a pandemic treaty, COP, Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals, or potential future health threats.

The promotion of the **SDGs** is clearly stated in the PES and EGP manifestos. Commitment to the **Paris Agreement** is clearly stated in the manifestos from the European Left and EGP. EPP and ALDE did not refer to such commitments, even though they provide a vision of the EU's role on the global stage, mainly focusing on international cooperation, defence and trade. EPP does hint at **the cross-border nature of health threats**. Cross-border health threats are also mentioned by PES and EGP, while the European Left stresses the need to cooperate at the global level on future pandemics. The **pandemic treaty** is however not developed in the manifestos, even though post-pandemic recovery is hinted at. As for **COP**, only EGP refers to the COP on biodiversity (COP15).

## Health crisis preparedness



*Health crisis preparedness is lacking from the ALDE manifesto. Others hint at the permacrisis context (PES) and the need to cooperate on health crises (European Left). EPP and EGP provide relevant elements relevant to pandemic and crisis preparedness.*

Following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, **preparedness** for future health crises is essential. The notion of **multicrisis, or permacrisis**, is quite visible in the manifestos, overall. The European Left however limits the focus to the need for global cooperation. The topic of health crises preparedness is essentially not addressed in ALDE's manifesto.

On the other hand, the EGP manifesto provides a few elements, with a highly relevant proposal of creating an EU Health Force to cooperate on future health emergencies and disasters. It also refers to some lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, which PES also does in its call for a stronger EU Health Union. Finally, the question is well developed in the EPP manifesto, in addition to elements on climate adaptation (Civil Protection Union). The manifesto refers to the need to be prepared and equipped for cross-border threats, in its call for a Health Union.

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<sup>17</sup> Including priority 3, Prevent and Combat health threats, including pandemics, applying a One Health approach.



## Resilience of health systems

“ *Resilience of health systems is overall not sufficiently addressed in the manifestos. Most manifestos hint at it without developing the question further (EPP, EGP, PES), or do not address it (ALDE). The European Left explicitly mentions the importance of strengthening public healthcare systems.*

Health systems are in crisis, especially looking at the health workforce situation, and are in strong need of investments. The topic is overall not sufficiently developed in the manifestos, and is completely absent from the ALDE document. The European Left makes a call for **strengthened health systems**, while PES only stresses the importance of well-funded public services and EPP hints at general investments in research and innovation. The EGP refers to the underfunding situation, but does not provide measures to solve it. Hinting at more **wellbeing** considerations in the economy, it however suggests a revision of the Maastricht Criteria, since it has led to cuts in public services. It would also rely further on the European Semester.

## Health workforce

“ *The health workforce question is overall insufficiently addressed in the manifestos. Some manifestos provide some elements (ALDE, EPP) or general elements supporting workers (PES, European Left), but overall, insufficient to answer the urgency of the situation.*

The health care workforce is in crisis, facing **shortages, medical deserts**, difficult **working conditions** and **training needs**. In analysing this topic, the mobility question was also considered. However, none of the parties cover the workforce question with the urgency it would deserve. These elements were not covered either, or only in a general workers' rights perspective.

The latter was particularly the case for PES, the European Left and EGP. PES recognises the key role of the workforce, but overall does not cover the health workforce question. However, the manifesto is very comprehensive in terms of improving workers' rights. The European Left does mention care workers. For workers in general, it refers to amending the Working Time Directive, among others. The EGP highlights the consequences of underinvestment towards healthcare systems and workers, but this remains very limited. Measures for workers are focused on skills, working conditions, and fair mobility. General elements are also considered on skills, mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and mobility in the healthcare sector in ALDE's manifesto. The latter hints at the healthcare workforce through a general approach to the labour market, with the aim of strengthening some sectors, with a focus on hospitals. Finally, the EPP refers to "the drain of health professionals", calling for the pay gap to be addressed. A hint is also made to health workers' training, without a clear measure. The shortages and medical deserts are strikingly missing, overall, with only a mention of deserts in the EPP manifesto.



## Antimicrobial resistance



*Antimicrobial resistance is addressed only by EGP and PES. The topic is missing from the ALDE, European Left and EPP manifestos.*

Antimicrobial resistance is a major global health challenge, relating to agriculture and access to medicines. Some targets refer to it at the EU level, specifically within Farm to Fork.<sup>18</sup> It can also be referred to in the context of the One Health approach, considering environmental, planetary health and public health together.

However, only two of the manifestos refer to this question. The EGP manifesto evokes the question in the perspective of avoiding further pandemics, mentioning the risk of “zoonotic spillover”. The EGP also refer to the question from an animal welfare perspective. Then, the PES manifesto focuses on the issue mainly from a research perspective. Neither refer to the Farm to Fork targets.

## Research in health



*Health-related research is extensively addressed in the EPP manifesto, while PES focus on research on antimicrobial resistance, vaccines and rare medicines. The European Left provides general elements on research, while ALDE and EGP do not address the topic.*

Research and innovation are key assets in the context of multicrisis that the EU is facing. There is a need for stronger measures that are specific to health. However, the manifestos overall do not cover sufficiently the issue, particularly from the health perspective, and is missing from ALDE's. The **Horizon Europe** programme is for instance absent from the five documents. The European Left's refers to research on multiple occasions but not in relation to health, while it is overall missing from the EGP's, mainly calling for research on the long-term impacts of COVID-19. PES calls for support to common European public research on public health issues such as vaccines, lifesaving medicines and AMR.

The topic is more developed in the EPP manifesto, with a significant emphasis on research (and its **funding**) and innovation in general, but also on health. Particularly, it focuses on “novel prevention strategies and treatments in health, to better counter climate change and avoid environmental disasters, improve mobility and make construction works more efficient and safer”. It also aims for the EU to become world leader in **medical research** and pharmaceutical innovation, pointing out that some areas such as child diseases and cancers are not funded enough.

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<sup>18</sup> Targets - Farm to Fork - reduce overall EU sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50% by 2030.

## 4. Comparison with EPHA objectives

EPHA has defined 10 key priorities in its [manifesto](#), “Strengthening Public Health Across the European Union”, published in November 2023. The priorities are presented in the box below.

### Box 1. EPHA priorities

1. Keeping health as a top priority on the EU political agenda
2. Providing the means for an ambitious EU health policy
3. Ensuring equal access to health and care
  - 3.1. Addressing health inequities
  - 3.2. Addressing inequities in access to medicines and care
  - 3.3. Fostering digital health literacy and equity
4. Enhancing civil society participation in health policymaking
5. Securing a healthy planet for healthy people
  - 5.1. Fostering prevention of non-communicable diseases
  - 5.2. Fostering sustainable food systems
  - 5.3. Addressing the anti-microbial resistance challenge
  - 5.4. Addressing the climate change crisis and its impacts on health

The five analysed manifestos have been compared to the priorities defined in the EPHA manifesto. Overall, the priorities are somewhat addressed but their coverage often lack focus on health promotion, prevention, or impacts on health.

Health, and wellbeing (priority 1), appear to be somewhat of a priority in several of the manifestos, but is not put as one in the ALDE document. The EGP and the PES manifestos provide an approach close to health in all policies, and with strong ties between health and environment policies. Several manifestos refer to the EU Health Union (EPP, PES, EGP), and stronger EU competences on environment, social policy and/or health (PES, EGP). However, no reference is made towards the SANT Committee. On the other hand, to place health high on the agenda, 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.

While some of the manifestos make a call for investments on wellbeing (PES) and for overall stronger EU budget (EGP), none refer to a stronger health budget (priority 2) that would place health high on the agenda. There are some hints of financial support to civil society (EPP, PES, EGP) which could in turn support stronger health policies at the EU level. In that regard, the EPHA manifesto provides a stronger call to provide the means of the necessary EU ambition on health, that would show that the COVID-19 lessons were learnt.

Health inequities (priority 3.1) and how to address them are covered in all manifestos, from anti-discrimination measures to tackling all forms of poverty, ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups and calling for a just transition. However, equity in access to care is less present. The EPHA priority includes 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 antidiscrimination measures.

Access to care (priority 3.2) is not so developed in the manifestos, even though there are a few calls for universal health coverage (EGP), universal access to care (European Left), and tackling medicines shortages (PES). The EPHA manifesto focuses more on access to medicines, research, and the Pharma Package, the latter lacking from all the manifestos.

Overall, digital transformation (priority 3.3) is addressed in the manifestos, but not regarding healthcare systems. EPHA's priority on the topic relies strongly on the implementation of the European Health Data Space, particularly the facilitation of epidemiology data collection, and cross-country secure data sharing. It also presents the importance of digital health literacy and digital skills, the ethical use of digital health tools and data, and an inclusive digital transition.

Civil Society organisations (priority 4) are mentioned in all manifestos, particularly regarding their key role in democratic processes and policymaking. Some of the manifestos hint or call for stronger financial mechanisms (EPP, PES, EGP), stronger civic space (EGP), and protection mechanisms (ALDE). The EPHA manifesto dedicates an entire priority to health civil society participation, through a dedicated Civil Society Strategy and access to sustainable funding mechanisms.

NCDs (priority 5.1) are not addressed, except in the EPP manifesto. Overall, risk factors and commercial determinants of health are addressed in none of the manifestos. Prevention can be hinted at in the calls for healthier environments, but is overall lacking. The EPHA manifesto places a central focus on NCDs, as they are the largest burden of ill health and early death in the EU. They are therefore intrinsically linked to healthy environments, sustainable food systems and prevention. EPHA therefore calls for a NCD Strategy than includes a Cardiovascular Health Plan, but also measures addressing commercial determinants, such as alcohol.











Food systems (priority 5.2) are overall covered by the manifestos, but often, only from an agricultural and food security perspective (EPP, ALDE). The EGP, PES and European Left make more reference to healthy foods, plant-based diets, and consumer choices. However, the EPHA manifesto does go further,

AMR (priority 5.3) is mentioned in only two of the manifestos. The EPHA priority provides more extensive elements, such as improved data, improved targets, synergies with the Pharma Package and Global Health Strategy, and a leading role of the EU on the question. The EPHA manifesto contains a priority for healthy and sustainable food systems and food environments which focuses on reinforcing the EU's common food policy with dedicated regulations and budget, relying on the Sustainable Food Systems Framework. It underlines the importance of resilient and sustainable food production at all levels of governance. Overall, it provides a stronger focus in making food options healthier, rather than placing the responsibility and burden of choice on the consumers through solely information.

Climate issues (priority 5.4) are addressed in all of the manifestos, from energy to fossil fuel emissions, and some elements on climate adaptation. However, except for some elements in the PES and EGP manifestos, the impacts of climate change on health and on vulnerable groups are lacking. The EPHA manifesto provides a strong focus on just transition, the impact of climate change on health, and relies on the One Health approach. These elements would be needed to handle the current permacrisis context. There is also a stronger focus on breaking policy silos.

These elements are summarised in the table below, starting from the EPHA priorities as an element of comparison.

**Table 2. Coverage of EPHA priorities in the manifestos**

Priority - EPHA	EPP	ALDE	PES	EGP	EL
 <b>1. Keeping health as a top priority on the EU political agenda</b>	Many references; EU Health Union	Health is not placed as a priority, only a few elements can relate to it	Approaching health and environment together; Stronger EU competence; EU Health Union	Approaching health, climate and environment together; Stronger EU competence; EU Health Union	The importance of public health is stressed
 <b>2. Providing the means for an ambitious EU health policy</b>	No mention of budget for health, but hints at civil society funding	No mention of budget for health	No mention of budget for health, but hints at civil society funding and investments in wellbeing	No mention of budget for health, but stronger budget in general, adequate funding for civil society	No mention of budget for health
 <b>3. Ensuring equal access to health and care:</b> 3.1. Addressing health inequities	Addressing gender equity, antidiscrimination, poverty, geographical inequities, intergenerational solidarity	Addressing gender equity, LGBTQIA+ rights	Addressing (energy, mobility, in-work) poverty, tackling all discriminations, ensuring just transition and affordable housing	Addressing (energy) poverty, discrimination and racism, ensuring just transition, gender equity	Tackling discrimination, inequities, gender equity, LGBTQIA+ rights, housing, and poverty
 <b>3. Ensuring equal access to health and care:</b> 3.2. Addressing inequities in access to medicines and care	Call to guarantee high health and care standards	Insufficient	Access to care, medicines shortages	Universal health coverage, issue of unmet healthcare needs, Care Deal	Universal and free access to care
 <b>3. Ensuring equal access to health and care:</b> 3.3. Fostering digital health literacy and equity	Digital transformation, inclusion, data protection but lack of focus on healthcare	Digital transformation, inclusion, literacy, AI, but lack of focus on healthcare	Digital transformation, inclusion, AI but lack of focus on healthcare	Digital transformation, inclusion, data protection, AI, but lack of focus on healthcare	Digital transformation but very general
 <b>4. Enhancing civil society participation in health policymaking</b>	Hints at support to civil society, hints at funding	Support and protection measures for civil society	Support to the crucial role of civil society, funding	Support to civil society, their role, and civic space, need for adequate funding	Highlight on the role of civil society
 <b>5. Securing a healthy planet for healthy people:</b> 5.1. Fostering prevention of non-communicable diseases	Partially addressed: strong focus on NCDs, but no prevention	Not addressed	NCDs not addressed, but elements of healthy environments	NCDs not sufficiently addressed, but elements of healthy environments	Not addressed
 <b>5. Securing a healthy planet for healthy people:</b> 5.2. Fostering sustainable food systems	Focus on food security and agriculture, insufficient on healthy food	Focus on agriculture, sustainability, lack of healthy food	Focus on healthy food systems, affordable food, but a focus on farming	Strong focus on healthy and sustainable food systems	Healthy food systems
 <b>5. Securing a healthy planet for healthy people:</b> 5.3. Addressing the anti-microbial resistance challenge	Not addressed	Not addressed	Call for research on AMR	Addressed, with a mention of the risk from zoonotic diseases	Not addressed
 <b>5. Securing a healthy planet for healthy people:</b> 5.4. Addressing the climate change crisis and its impacts on health	Climate addressed, insufficient Green Deal ambition and link to health	Climate evoked but insufficient link to health	Strong just transition angle, call for a liveable planet	Green and Social Deal, hints at need of healthier environments	Climate addressed but insufficient link to health

## 5. Summary table

The table below summarises the coverage of the analysed topics in the five main political parties' manifestos. It also provides insights on a few key regulatory proposals.

**Table 3. Summary table**

Topic	EPP	ALDE	PES	EGP	EL
<b>Public health as a priority</b>	✓ Mentions of EU Health Union and wellbeing	– Public health is not placed as a priority	✓ Stronger Health Union, wellbeing	✓ Health in all Policies hint, wellbeing Proposal: Green and Social Deal	✓ Importance of public health
<b>Institutional elements</b>	✓ EU Health Union, Vice President on Demography	– General elements	✓ Stronger Health Union	✓ Explanation Proposal: EU civil society protection mechanism	✓ Several elements that could refer to public health policy Proposal: European Fund for public services
<b>Sustainable Food Systems</b>	– Insufficient, focus on agriculture and food security	– Focus on agriculture and environmental sustainability	✓ Food systems, healthy and affordable food, and food security, with a focus on farming	✓ Focus on healthy food, food systems, and sustainability Proposals: Plant-Based Treaty; Common Food and Agriculture Policy	✓ Healthy food systems
<b>Non-Communicable Diseases</b>	✓ Ambition and key proposals; however prevention is lacking Proposals: European plan to address Alzheimer's disease, dementia and Parkinson's disease; European Cardiovascular Health Plan; implementation of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan	✗ No mention	✗ No mention	– Brief mention	✗ No mention
<b>Mental Health</b>	✓ Addressed with a proposal Proposal: EU Action Plan for Mental Health	✗ No mention	✓ Addressed with a proposal Proposal: European Mental Health Strategy	– Brief mention	✗ No mention

Topic	EPP	ALDE	PES	EGP	EL
<b>Health equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Focus on health, gender, age, but also territorial equity. However the asylum policy could present a mismatch with the respect of EU values and fundamental rights</li> <li>Proposals: New Pact for intergenerational fairness; European Guarantee for older citizens; strengthen the EU strategy for Outermost Regions; strengthen the European Care Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– LGBTI+ rights and gender equity</li> <li>Proposals: 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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Focus on energy poverty, ending poverty in all its forms, focus on gender equality and vulnerable groups, just transition</li> <li>Proposals: EU Strategy on Age Equality; European Anti-Discrimination Directive; European Plan for Affordable Housing; EU Strategy for Combatting Homelessness; fully implement 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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Health equity, antidiscrimination, and poverty</li> <li>Proposals: 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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Strong focus on inequalities, gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, housing and poverty (including energy poverty),</li> <li>Proposals: 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</li> </ul>
<b>Access to care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Medicines shortages briefly mentioned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Quality healthcare accessible to all, address medicines shortages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Well considered Proposal: EU legislation for a Universal Health Coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Free universal access to health and care, but insufficiently developed</li> </ul>
<b>Digital transformation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Insufficient focus on health systems</li> <li>Proposal: European Workers' Guarantee for the Digital Market (not health specific)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Insufficient focus on health systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Insufficient focus on health systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Insufficient focus on health systems</li> <li>Proposal: Digital Fairness Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ No mention</li> </ul>
<b>Environment and health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Circular economy, fleet electrification. Insufficient link to health, focus only on some topics (energy, fossil fuels)</li> <li>Proposals: implementation of the Net-Zero Industry Act and the Critical Raw Materials Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of details</li> <li>Proposal: European strategy for the bioeconomy; a pan-European rail network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Pollutions, chemicals well addressed. Air pollution is however not addressed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ WHO air quality criteria, topic extensively addressed</li> <li>Proposals: Green and Social Deal; revision of the Green Taxonomy; Just Transition Law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of concrete measures</li> <li>Proposals: implementation of the Sustainable Mobility Directive; changes in the banking policy of the ECB to foster green investments</li> </ul>

Topic	EPP	ALDE	PES	EGP	EL
<b>Climate change adaptation and mitigation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy, phase out of fossil fuels. Insufficient link to health, focus only on some topics (energy, fossil fuels). Risk of lower level of ambition on the Green Deal</li> <li>Proposals: implementation of the Net-Zero Industry Act and the Critical Raw Materials Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of details</li> <li>Proposals: expand the scope of the European Emissions Trading System (ETS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable transport, energy efficiency, renewables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensively addressed</li> <li>Proposals: Green and Social Deal; Global Green Deal; European Climate Ticket framework; revision of the Green Taxonomy; Just Transition Law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Just transition and energy, but climate superficially addressed</li> </ul>
<b>Commitment to global and multilateral initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only references to global EU role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with several commitments (i.e., SDGs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with several commitments (i.e., SDGs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with several commitments (i.e., SDGs)</li> </ul>
<b>Health crisis preparedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several elements on pandemic and crisis preparedness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hint at preparing to future cross-border health threats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several elements on pandemic and crisis preparedness</li> <li>Proposal: EU Health Force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient, focus on global cooperation</li> </ul>
<b>Resilience of health systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hint but insufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of strengthening health systems</li> </ul>
<b>Health workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief mention</li> <li>Proposal: European Workers' Guarantee for the Digital Market (not health specific)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of focus on the health workforce in labour proposals</li> <li>Proposal: Revision of the mutual recognition of professional qualifications (not health specific)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of focus on the health workforce in labour proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficiently addressed</li> <li>Proposal: EU Right to Disconnect; Right to Remote Work (not health specific)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of focus on the health workforce in labour proposals; mention of care economy</li> </ul>
<b>Antimicrobial resistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mention</li> </ul>
<b>Research in health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for health research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research on AMR, vaccines, rare medicines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reference to health</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU enlargement, treaties changes, European Convention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU enlargement, treaties changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU enlargement, treaties changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU enlargement, treaties changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treaties changes</li> </ul>



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**EUROPEAN PUBLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE (EPHA)**

Rue de Trèves 49-51 | 1040 Brussels (BELGIUM) | +32 (0) 2 230 30 56

[www.epha.org](http://www.epha.org) | [epha@epha.org](mailto:epha@epha.org)



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european **public health** alliance