



Editorial

The imperative for cross-area action to combat commercial determinants of health

Since our last newsletter focusing on the Healthy Environments Cluster, we've witnessed substantial institutional changes. A new, more fragmented, European Parliament has elevated the former Subcommittee on Health (SANT) to a full Committee status. Meanwhile, the European Commission has undergone reform, introduced a newly appointed Commissioner for Health and has distributed health responsibilities across various Directorates-General. We hope that this restructuring reflects a political will to integrate health considerations across multiple policy areas.

However, these transformations also bring challenges. Health funding has been reduced, and health issues are no longer as prominent on the political agenda, particularly as we focus on health outside the innovation perspective. The redistribution of health competencies across several Directorates-General has created a more fragmented policymaking landscape, making it harder to protect public health effectively. At the same time, [funding for civil society organisations \(CSOs\) is shrinking](#), reducing the space for our advocacy and action amidst [increased lobbying by health-harming industries](#). These industries continue to threaten public health with aggressive marketing strategies targeting young people with unhealthy foods and escalating the use of alcohol and new, addictive, tobacco products across Europe.

In response to the diminished support for and inclusion of CSOs, EPHA has taken a co-coordinator role in the [EU4Health Civil Society Alliance](#). Yet, we lack a similar alliance to combat the pressures from the health-harming industry. There is an urgent need for organisations like ours to come together and counter these challenges through a holistic approach that fosters effective prevention policies. Such policies must encompass health equity, digital transformation, the healthcare workforce, as well as global public health challenges.

This mindset has already been embraced by several EPHA members and allies this year, who have made significant strides towards establishing health-conducive environments. You can find some of these examples highlighted in this newsletter:

- **Toma Mikaluskaitė of the European Cancer Leagues (ECL)**, a member of EPHA, highlights the critical importance of cancer prevention, treatment, and care within the European Parliament. Next year, ECL will continue its role as the secretariat for the [Members of the European Parliament Against Cancer \(MAC\)](#) interest group.
- Colleagues from the **OECD, including Sabine Vuik, Cormac Everard, and Michele Cecchini**, have provided a comprehensive analysis of the growing burden of cancer across Europe. Their [recent report](#) focuses on the economic

impacts and actionable prevention strategies, serving as a fundamental resource in fortifying EPHA's evidence-based advocacy efforts.

- **Rebecka Öberg and Otto Nermo from IOGT-NTO**, a member of EPHA, have discussed the importance of the Swedish alcohol monopoly. Their efforts underscore ongoing challenges and highlight the critical role that collaboration among CSOs plays in safeguarding national policies and influencing the broader EU framework.
- In the realm of nutrition, **Béatrice Morio and Jessica Doppler from the Healthy Diet Healthy Life Initiative (HDHL)**, where EPHA as a member of the stakeholder advisory board, have emphasised the necessity of health-centric food systems, advocating for ambitious policies to foster healthier eating practices across Europe.
- EPHA's advisory role also extends to the **Joint Action on Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes (JACARDI)**, where **Natalia Skogberg** has stressed the importance of integrating equity and diversity systematically into all health initiatives, tailoring approaches to meet the specific needs of different populations and areas.
- Lastly, **Lars Mürter from the Nordic Wellbeing Academy** has highlighted the significant gaps in mental health indicators post-pandemic. His insights are guiding EPHA's coordination efforts in developing new, comprehensive indicators to navigate the complex landscape of mental health.

As we conclude this year, we look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead. It is crucial that we continue to urge the EU, in this new political term, to fulfil its commitments, such as fully implementing the [Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#) which mandates clear consumer information on alcohol, tobacco, and food. Simultaneously, we must escalate our ambitions concerning NCD prevention policies and the creation of health-protecting environments.

Moving forward, we are not merely reacting to changes but are actively shaping a healthier future for all in Europe. We remain committed to advocating for policies rooted in evidence, designed to shield our communities and policy-making processes from the detrimental influence of health-harming industries. To succeed, maintaining a united front is more crucial than ever. Together, we are stronger, and together, we can make a significant difference. Stay engaged with EPHA as we continue to drive changes and advocate for a healthier, more equitable Europe.



Alessandro Gallina

Senior Policy Manager for NCD Prevention, EPHA

This Month's Top Stories



Putting health at the heart of food systems: A European competitiveness perspective

By *Béatrice Morio and Jessica Doppler, Healthy Diet, Healthy Life (HDHL)*

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Tackling the impact of cancer on health, the economy and society

By *Sabine Vuik, Cormac Everard and Michele Cecchini, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)*

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Is the Swedish alcohol monopoly toast, or a reason for toasting

By *Rebecka Öberg & Otto Nermo, IOGT-NTO*

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Flying blind into a storm – a good strategy for mental health in Europe?

By *Lars Münter, Nordic Wellbeing Academy*

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Are you walking the walk, or still talking the talk?

By *Natalia Skogberg, Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare for the EU JACARDI consortium*

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Why the European Parliament must continue its lead in the fight against cancer

By *Toma Mikalauskaitė, Policy Lead, the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)*

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EPHA Updates



EPHA Contribution to the European Commission Evaluation of the 2016 National Emissions reduction Commitments Directive (NECD)

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Letter calls for health civil society to contribute to the ECs vision for agriculture and food

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Health Equity Feed | Structural solutions for health equity, women's health, and commemorating World Aids Day

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EPHA is proud to contribute to the Zero Hidden Hunger EU Horizon Project, addressing micronutrient deficiencies, or "hidden hunger," affecting millions in Europe. This initiative unites experts and stakeholders to create innovative, sustainable solutions for better nutrition and public health.

Learn about the profound economic and social impacts of micronutrient deficiencies in the EU in the article below by Lee-Ann Burke, Brendan McElroy, and Siân Astley.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

Additionally, learn more in this short video what “Hidden Hunger” is, as well as other key aspects of this project.

[WATCH HERE](#)

EPHA Events



Consultation on meaningful, inclusive and safe participation of people of African descent in public affairs

OHCHR Brussels and EPHA, through the DisQo Stakeholder Network, presented to the European Commission a document with policy recommendations for the forthcoming post 2025 EU Anti-racism Action Plan.

[READ THE REPORT](#)

News From Members

International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF)

Accelerating universal health coverage for diabetes and other NCDs



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International Federation of Medical Students Association Europe (IFMSA)

Youth in Action: Combating Antimicrobial Resistance Across Asia-Pacific during World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 2024

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Mental Health Europe

Report on Recovery based human rights indicators in mental health services

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Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE)

'Forever chemicals' found above threshold levels in many water bodies in Europe

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European Respiratory Society (ERS)

Apply or nominate for the ERS Scientific Awards 2025

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The European Society for Organ Transplantation

Highlights from the Santander Global Summit in Transplantation

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European Institute of Women's Health (EIWH)

New technologies, new disparities: the intersection of digital Health Literacy and women's health

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