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75th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

Provisional Agenda item 3: "Second European Programme of Work, 2026–2030 - "United Action for Better Health" (EPW2) (EUR/RC75/22)

Joint statement by non-state actors on the European Programme of Work 2

Dear Regional Director Dr Kluge, esteemed delegates, dear colleagues,

The European Public Health Alliance, on behalf of the undersigned civil-society organisations, warmly welcomes the *second European Programme of Work (EPW2)* and congratulates WHO Europe and its Member States for co-creating such a forward-looking, evidence-based and inclusive framework.

EPW2 comes at a time of profound transformation. Geopolitical instability, the climate emergency, demographic change, the continuing burden of mental-health conditions and NCDs such as cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases, as well as rapid technological advances are reshaping what health means – and how we protect it. We welcome the clear articulation of *security, solidarity, sustainability and trust* as the compass values guiding WHO Europe's vision that *health must remain a universal commitment – never politicised, always prioritised*.

We particularly commend the five strategic priorities of EPW2:

- **Health security** – building preparedness and resilience across borders
- **Tackling NCDs and the drivers of ill health** – addressing commercial, social and environmental determinants
- **Living and ageing in good physical and mental health** – ensuring healthy life at every age
- **Climate and health** – confronting the climate crisis as a health crisis
- **Health systems of the future** – grounded in strong primary health care, a skilled workforce and digital innovation

We also welcome the two *special initiatives* on *violence against women and girls* and on *Primary Health Care for the Future*, both essential to realising equity and inclusion.

european public health alliance

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EPW2's emphasis on *intersectoral action, social participation, innovation and foresight, leadership development* and *participatory governance* rightly recognises that no single actor or sector can address today's health challenges alone. Yet, WHO Europe's own recognition of severe funding constraints is sobering. Delivering on this vision will require not only technical excellence but also new forms of partnership, trust and investment.

These challenges cannot be addressed by individual governments or health systems. We must ask: *is equity still truly at the heart of our collective agenda?* Do all population groups enjoy equal *access to health services* and the means to act on their own health challenges? Are we prepared for the intersecting pressures of *climate change, environmental degradation, ageing populations, mental health burdens and youth vulnerability*? The health sector cannot shoulder this alone.

Civil society stands ready to play its part – to bridge systems, citizens and affected communities, translate science into action and build trust where it is most fragile. But to deliver on this societal role, just as the health and care workforce does, civil society organisations across the European Region need **recognition, capacity-building and structural support**.

Therefore, we call on:

- **WHO Europe** to make collaboration with civil society a *routine practice* – from co-creation to implementation of their initiatives;
- **Member States** to honour their collective commitment to *social participation* as adopted in *WHA Resolution 77.2 (Social Participation for Universal Health Coverage, Health and Well-being)*, by embedding civil society engagement as a standard element of national and regional health governance.

We remain committed to partnering with WHO Europe and Member States to make EPW2's promise a lived reality – for healthier, fairer and more resilient societies that leave no one behind.

Thank you.

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Signatories

1. Cerebral Palsy Europe (CP-ECA)
2. EUROCAM
3. EuroHealthNet
4. European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA)
5. European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD)
6. European Federation of Nurses (EFN)
7. European Nursing Students' Association (ENSA)
8. European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNNMA)
9. European Forum for Primary Care (IFPC)
10. European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP)
11. European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
12. European Public Health Association (EUPHA)
13. European Respiratory Society (ERS)
14. International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO)
15. International Association of Health Care Professionals (IAHCP)
16. International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF Europe)
17. VAS - European Independent Foundation in Angiology/Vascular Medicine
18. WONCA Europe