EU4health
Civil Society Alliance

Brussels, 11 July 2024

To the President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
B - 1049 Brussels
Belgium

Subject: Appointment of a Vice-President for Health, Wellbeing and Social Rights

Dear President von der Leyen,

We are writing to you to congratulate you on your nomination by the European Council to serve a second term as Commission President. We believe that your experience over your first mandate period is invaluable in view of the many challenges Europe faces. We recall how much the first period of your mandate was dominated by health as the COVID-19 pandemic broke and Member States at first responded in a fragmented manner, despite the cross-border nature of the threat. Your leadership ensured a more unified approach including joint vaccine procurement and a restructuring of EU institutional capacity on health. Your Commission further pioneered new goal-orientated approaches to major disease challenges through ground-breaking mechanisms such as Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, the Healthier Together Initiative and the Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health. The Commission you led has overseen the creation of a European Health Union with strong support from Member States.

Yet we also notice the strong desire to move on from the pandemic, particularly with the need to address other pressing challenges confronting the continent. This is evident in the near absence of explicit references to health in the EU Strategic Agenda. However, moving on without learning the lesson of the pandemic, of the need to maintain EU health as a priority, would be a serious mistake. To reflect this priority and apply the lessons that you so painfully led us through within the current EU institutional structure, we urge you to appoint a Vice-President for Health, Wellbeing and Social Rights during your second mandate.

The nomination of this Vice-President would send a strong signal that health retains its priority. The Vice-President would ensure that the European Health Union is further implemented, strengthened and deepened, with appropriate funding under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-2034) to develop initiatives on mental and physical health. A strong and coordinated EU health policy is crucial for the sustainability of health systems and access to healthcare throughout Europe. These will be facing increasing challenges in the coming years, notably in the context of the climate crisis and of the ageing population, as well as the increasing burden of Non-Communicable Diseases and the growing threat from Anti-Microbial Resistance. The Vice-President would ensure that health is prioritised across all policies and that other challenges, such as food security, the war in Ukraine, or the Middle East crisis, are tackled from a global health security perspective. The Vice-President will also likely help fulfill some of the outstanding commitments from your first term.

We hope that the team you assemble for your second mandate will therefore include a Vice-President for Health, Wellbeing and Social Rights as it would significantly contribute to

promoting and ensuring good mental and physical health and wellbeing for millions of people throughout Europe.

Yours sincerely,

Signatories:

- European Patients' Forum (EPF)
- European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
- Alzheimer Europe
- EURORDIS - Rare Diseases Europe
- Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)
- Association of European Coeliac Societies (AOECS)
- Digestive Cancers Europe
- EUROCAM
- EuroHealthNet
- European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG)
- Eurocare
- European Central Council of Homeopaths (ECCH)
- European Cancer Organisation (ECO)
- European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA)
- European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Association (EFA)
- European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA)
- European Health Management Association (EHMA)
- European Heart Network (EHN)
- European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA)
- European Liver Patients' Association (ELPA)
- European Public Health Association (EUPHA)
- European Respiratory Society (ERS)
- International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDF-Europe)
- International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)
- International Federation of Anthroposophical Medical Associations (IVAA)
- Mental Health Europe (MHE)
- Psychedelic Access and Research European Alliance (PAREA)
- Smoke Free Partnership
- TB Europe Coalition (TBEC)
- All Policies for a Healthy Europe
- Fertility Europe

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