

Support for health civil society and the restoration of operating grants under the EU4Health Work Programme

We, the undersigned civil society organisations (CSOs) from across Europe, stand in solidarity with EU health CSOs calling for meaningful, adequate and predictable operating support under the 2026 EU4Health Work Programme and beyond.

We call on the European Commission to act upon the concerns raised by Member States and put into practice the principles set out in the EU Civil Society Strategy, including its commitment to provide CSOs with adequate, sustainable and transparent funding that enables meaningful participation in policymaking.

In recent years, CSOs across Europe have operated in an increasingly challenging environment, facing shrinking resources and, in some countries, attempts to discredit their work and restrict their ability to operate independently. Against this backdrop, the removal of operating grants for EU health CSOs is particularly concerning. This comes despite many organisations having concluded Framework Partnership Agreements with the European Commission and operating grants representing only a small share of the overall EU4Health budget. It also comes in the context of strong political support for their continuation, including a non-paper signed by 13 Member States in March 2026 and [a letter](#) signed by 70 MEPs from different political groups and countries in April 2026, both addressed to the European Commission.

This issue goes beyond health. **As the EU prepares its next Multiannual Financial Framework, we are concerned about the precedent this could set for CSOs across sectors.** The commitments of the EU Civil Society Strategy must be translated into concrete action, including adequate and predictable funding that enables civil society to participate independently and meaningfully in EU policymaking.

EU health and patient advocacy organisations are an essential part of European democracy. They bring the voices and experiences of patients, communities and citizens into policymaking and contribute independent expertise to public health debates and major EU legislation. Like CSOs in other sectors, they help ensure pluralistic, balanced, and evidence-based policymaking. Member States have made clear through two votes on the draft 2026 EU4Health Work Programme the importance of continued support for health civil society.

We therefore call on the European Commission to reinstate meaningful, adequate and sustainable operating grants for EU health CSOs in the 2026 EU4Health Work Programme and beyond.

We stand with our colleagues in the health sector and with the broader principle that civil society must have the means to participate fully and independently in European democracy. The EU's commitment to a strong civil society must be reflected not only in its strategies, but also in the funding that makes meaningful participation possible.



A.N.I.F.

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