

Press Release

EU policymakers should prioritise health and well-being ahead of 2024 elections, say experts at the EHFG

The Healthy Europe coalition highlighted the importance of a European Health Union against a backdrop of new health, economic and climate challenges

Bad Hofgastein, AUSTRIA: 29 September 2022 – All Policies for a Healthy Europe (Healthy Europe) – a cross-sectoral coalition of NGOs, think-tanks, associations, and corporations – convened a high-level session on [‘Well-being as a priority for the next European Union \(EU\) Commission’](#) at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) today. Headlining the panel was **Vytenis Andriukaitis**, Chair of Healthy Europe and the World Health Organisation Special Envoy for the European region, who stressed the role of the EU in advancing public health goals in a time of geopolitical turbulence, a looming energy crisis and a climate emergency.

Andriukaitis said: “We’ve seen continuous public demand for an increased role in health for the EU. Looking ahead to the 2024 elections, we need to ensure that strong mechanisms are in place to deliver a healthy future for all. This is why the time to act is now to promote an EU-level healthcare system that’s centred on people, innovation, and value-based care to ensure that citizens’ health, our economies, societies and the environment are better protected.”

He was joined by **Kunegonde Carpentier**, Senior Director of External Affairs and Strategic Alliances, Johnson & Johnson (founding partner of Healthy Europe); **Susanne Schlagl**, Head of the Vodafone Centre for Health with Deloitte, Vodafone; **Elizabeth Kuiper**, Associate Director and Head of the Social Europe and Well-being programme at the European Policy Centre; and **Dr. Vesna Kerstin Petrič**, from the Slovenian Ministry of Health . The discussion – moderated by **Matthias Wismar**, Programme Manager of the European Observatory for Health Systems and Policies – heard views on why and how health and well-being should remain a priority for the European Commission ahead of the 2024 elections.

Advocating for a ‘health in all policies approach’ at the core of a future European Health Union, **Kunegonde Carpentier** emphasised the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration for effective EU-level governance. She said, “For sustainable and inclusive societal growth, stakeholders across regional, national and local policy domains must consider health and well-being at the heart of their decision-making as it is not an isolated intervention area. Health and well-being touch every single facet of our lives.”

The conversation also touched on how the European Health Union could impact the digital transformation of health systems, which are critical for the future of clinical care, research, regulation and policymaking. “It has become increasingly clear that the use of technology can highly benefit citizens’ access to healthcare. Telemedicine has emerged from the pandemic and will continue to grow, granting an opportunity for citizens and professionals to greatly benefit from it” said **Susanne Schlagl**.

Noting the renewed significance of health in building a more resilient Europe, **Elizabeth Kuiper** said: “We need to think where we are headed as the #EU. Times of declining trust in democracies puts an impetus on an Economy of Well-being. However, we need to move beyond this by putting our money where our mouth is.”

An inclusive platform for European health policy exchange, EHFG was where the vision for the Healthy Europe coalition was conceived in 2018. Since then, the coalition has continued to advocate for the holistic consideration of health and well-being across three main policy areas, including the Economy, Environment and Digital.

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About All Policies for a Healthy Europe

Created in 2018, All Policies for a Healthy Europe is a cross-sectoral coalition of NGOs, think-tanks, trade associations and businesses. We advocate for health and wellbeing to be put at the heart of European policymaking. The diverse mix of multisectoral stakeholders brings a unique perspective to the health and wellbeing debate, pushing for increased awareness of the broader economic and social dimension to health issues.

Note to Editor:

For more info and a copy of the manifesto, please go to www.healthyeurope.eu or contact: communications@ap4he.eu