EU MUST MAKE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING A TOP PRIORITY FOR ITS CITIZENS

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BRUSSELS, (March 21) – '**All Policies for a Healthy Europe' – a coalition of influential non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations, think-tanks, trade associations and individual companies — has launched a manifesto calling on the European Union to make health and well-being a top priority after May's European Elections in a bid to unlock Europe's economic and social potential.**

Launching its 'Healthy Europe' manifesto at a cross-party event in the European Parliament and attended by key figures from the OECD and the World Health Organisation (WHO), AP4HE urged Europe's politicians to make citizens' health and well-being a strategic objective for the next European Commission and Parliament to create "a new and stronger economic model" over the next five years.

The launch event of the manifesto was endorsed by the current rotating Romanian EU Presidency and attended by representatives from the government of Finland, which will take over the EU Presidency in July.

"The health and well-being of people is critical to Europe's economic health and well-being," Mark Pearson, OECD Deputy Director for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs said.

"We must go beyond GDP. In our 'Better Life' index, every year health and well-being is the number one issue that comes up. So we need to find a different way of talking about health, delivering outcomes and putting health and well-being at the heart of policy-making," he added.

The manifesto says the new European institutions should "encourage and facilitate multi-level governance – with cities, regions, national governments, and civil society organisations at European and at grassroots level, working collaboratively with EU bodies in different contexts and formats".

"In doing so, the EU can become a global leader in innovating new approaches to social investment, the Circular Economy, and the digital transformation of health systems," the manifesto states.

All Policies for a Healthy Europe proposes three main policy clusters to be developed by the next European Commission to promote health and well-being:

- Healthy Societies: This includes mental as well as physical well-being, diet and nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation, poverty reduction, housing, social inclusion, health promotion in schools and workplaces, work-life balance, healthy ageing.
- Healthy Environment: This cluster focuses on topics such as air and water quality, noise pollution, hazardous chemicals, food sustainability, clean energy, and the role of corporate actors in improving environmental and human health.
- Healthy Care Systems: This focuses on the modernisation and sustainability of health and long-term care systems to ensure universal health coverage (UHC) and access to quality care services without discrimination. It aims to strengthen prevention, patient-centred chronic disease management – including patient empowerment, health literacy & self-care, health workforce sustainability, and the digital transformation of care. Vaccination coverage and efforts to tackle anti-microbial resistance and other cross-border health threats are also addressed.

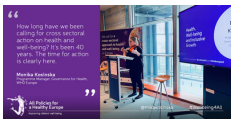
Digitalisation and the development of data-driven tools and technologies for improving health and well-being across sectors is also seen as a key enabler to the delivery of the outcomes sought in the manifesto.

The creation of the manifesto follows a Eurobarometer survey in which over 70% of citizens called for greater action at EU level in the area of health and well-being.

"Time for action is now. We have been talking about health and well-being in Europe for long enough. For the last 40 years. So it is now time to start delivering outcomes," Monika Kosinska, WHO Programme Manager Governance for Health said.

AP4HE wants a senior European Commissioner to oversee cross- and inter- sectoral action on health

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and well-being, supported by the Commission health services and the Secretariat-General. “This could fall within the remit of a Vice-President for Health and Well-being or Sustainable Development,” AP4HE says in its manifesto.

It also proposes to strengthen health and well-being impact assessments in the EU. “Health impact assessment should be carried out at an early, formative stage in the policy making process, drawing upon internal and external health expertise,” the manifesto states.

AP4HE would also like to see a so-called ‘Home for Health’ within the Commission, creating a centre of knowledge and expertise and cooperate with other inter- national organisations such as the WHO and OECD.

“This manifesto is a step in the right direction and comes at the right time for the European Union. The Finnish EU Presidency looks forward to working with AP4HE on creating an ‘Economy of Well-being’ for Europe,” Veli-Mikel Niemi, Director General, International Affairs at the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health said.

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