

Ensuring EU Funded Medical R&I Delivers for EU Citizens and Beyond

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Health Action International (HAI) has joined other civil society organisations in a reaction to the European Commission's proposal on Horizon Europe:

We, the undersigned twenty one civil society organisations, raise our strong concern about the European Commission proposal on the next research framework programme, Horizon Europe, which fails to make a serious commitment to ensure public interest-driven biomedical research and investment (R&I).

Though the challenge of access to medicines has long been a concern for low- and middle-income countries, high prices and the lack of added therapeutic value now also threaten equitable access to treatment in the world's wealthiest countries, including in Europe. Despite numerous political statements and recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council to find alternative and sustainable R&I models that would guarantee better health outcomes for everyone, the Commission proposal on Horizon Europe fails to include concrete safeguards that would help to maximise public return on investments for publicly funded R&I and address public health needs. The new framework also rolls back EU commitments on the fight against poverty-related and neglected diseases, which suffer from a lack of private sector interest to invest in R&I.

We believe that the need to deliver suitable, safe, effective and affordable innovative health technologies should be prioritised in all six health areas of intervention identified in the Horizon Europe framework.

Furthermore, a new requirement should be introduced according to which all beneficiaries of EU public funding for biomedical R&I for treatment, prevention or diagnosis of seriously debilitating or life-threatening diseases shall commit to access, effectiveness, affordability and availability principles. Details on how the project results and potential health products will be made accessible, effective, affordable and available shall be outlined jointly by all applicants in the appropriate section of their application. Depending on the stage of R&I, some elements will be developed to a greater or lesser extent.

The next EU research programme is an important vehicle to implement increasingly prominent political recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council and to increase the societal impact of biomedical R&I. This will be key to reinforce EU citizens' confidence and show that investments into health R&I result in high-quality, accessible and affordable products and more effective health systems.

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