

**PHRAME**

Promoting Health Rights and  
Access to Medicines in Europe

# INTRODUCTION

Medicines are crucial for improving our health and well-being. But the price of many new and patented medicines in Europe is growing higher every year, jeopardising the ability of patients to access them when needed and threatening the sustainability of our healthcare systems.

Elsewhere in the European health sphere, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become dominated by an overly positive narrative pushed by the pharmaceutical companies and MedTech. In reality, major risks exist, including discrimination, harming people's health and safety, exacerbating health inequalities, and infringing on patients' fundamental rights.

Health Action International's (HAI) Promoting Health Rights and Access to Medicines in Europe (PHRAME) project is on a mission to advance policies that put the health and well-being of patients first. We do this by focusing on three main pillars:

- Equitable Access to Affordable Medicines
- Artificial Intelligence and Health
- Democratisation of Medicines Policy

Read on to find out more...



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## Equitable Access to Affordable Medicines

Excessively high-priced medicines remain a challenge for the economic sustainability of European Union (EU) public health systems. Intellectual property-based monopolies constitute a serious obstacle to competition, hindering the ability of governments to reduce costs while denying citizens the freedom of choice of therapeutic alternatives. HAI promotes the use of TRIPS flexibilities and other health-sensitive intellectual property management tools as a means to tackle these issues.

In 2023, we will also be working to improve the availability and uptake of diagnostics to support responsible prescribing and stewardship of antibiotics as a means to tackle the ever-growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).



## Artificial Intelligence and Health

Currently, no harmonised standards or laws exist that specifically regulate AI-assisted medical devices and other health AI, while such devices are already being developed and used. The EU's AI Act provides an opportunity to change this. However, current regulatory provisions in the Act fall short in protecting patients' rights. What is needed are solid regulatory requirements in legal frameworks for health AI, which take into account the risks for health and fundamental rights violations.

In 2023, HAI—as one of the few civil society organisations active in the field of tech policy and health—will continue its research, advocacy and awareness raising to protect patients' rights and ensure AI technologies do not exacerbate health inequalities.



## Democratisation of Medicines Policy

Increased accountability is key to ensuring public trust in EU institutions. Yet, issues or policy proposals relevant to access to medicines are often discussed with little scrutiny or accountability. Civil society therefore holds a vital role in scrutinising the work of the EU institutions, regulatory authorities and national governments. But patient, consumer and healthcare professional groups need capacity and expertise if they are to engage fully in the medicines policy debate and contribute to overall health outcomes of policy decisions.

HAI works with a broad network of individuals and organisations to share knowledge and best practice, as well as working directly with policy- and lawmakers, including through our role as co-chair of the European Parliamentary Working Groups on Access to Medicines and Poverty-related Diseases.



## The HAI Europe Association

The HAI Europe Association is a membership body made up of over 120 organisations and individuals that are interested in promoting access to needed medicines in the EU. Among them are civil society organisations, patient and consumer groups, healthcare professionals, academics and students.

HAI works closely with its members on consultation responses, events, webinars, and publications, and welcomes new members who wish to work collaboratively on important EU medicines policy issues.

To maintain the independence of the Association, members must not have financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry and make a declaration of interest stating they are free from conflicts of interest.

For more information, email [info@haiweb.org](mailto:info@haiweb.org)



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