

**Promoting Health Rights and  
Access to Medicines in Europe**

**PHRAME II**

# INTRODUCTION

Sustainable access to medicines and vaccines remains an issue in a number of European Union (EU) Member States, especially pertaining to the sustainability of public health systems. Such issues are notably due to a research and development model which incentivises innovation through monopoly rights.

Simultaneously, the use of AI in healthcare poses its own set of specific risks, which oftentimes policy makers and other stakeholders are unfamiliar with, despite AI being a key interest for the EU.

Health Action International's (HAI) Promoting Health Rights and Access to Medicines in Europe 2 (PHRAME II) project will build on our previous PHRAME project and aims to advance policies that put the health and well-being of patients first. We do this by focusing on three mutually supportive (and interlinked) themes:

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

Read on to find out more...

## Equitable Access to Affordable Medicines

Excessively high-priced medicines remain a challenge for the economic sustainability of 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. Through national and EU-level advocacy and other outreach measures, HAI promotes the use of TRIPS flexibilities and other health-sensitive intellectual property management tools as a means to tackle these issues.

Other issues that we will focus on in 2024 include highlighting progress and challenges of the implementation of the World Health Assembly transparency resolution, providing recommendations on addressing the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), as well as making recommendations for conditions on public funding that ensure a public return.



# Artificial Intelligence and Health

The use of AI in healthcare presents a range of specific risks due to several reasons, such as the inherent susceptibility of bias contained health data. The use of such biased data in the healthcare context can have direct and major consequences on health and wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable groups.

With the AI Act now adopted by the EU Parliament, HAI will continue monitoring its implementation and press for sector-specific standards that address healthcare. Elsewhere, we will advocate for responsible use of AI in medicines development, research, and regulation, providing feedback and responding to public consultations.

In 2024, 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 will continue to promote facilitation of linking and learning between all stakeholders involved in global health discussions.

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. In 2024, HAI and partners will continue to engage in a range of fora, including the Novel Medicines Platform and the newly formed Critical Medicines Alliance.



## The HAI Europe Association

The HAI Europe Association is a membership body made up of over 121 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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