

**DGSMP**  
**WPSEU 072/2019**

Berlin, 23. April 2019

**1. European Social Fund Plus (ESF+):**

**What does your party plan to do to support the development of more preventive and integrated health (and social) systems frameworks under ESF+?**

**Answer:**

We consider the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations as the benchmark of our political engagement. Only by considering these goals can we tackle the economic, ecological, social and international challenges that are ahead of us. This is why we want the European Commission to assess the effect on these development goals of every European budget expenditure and every legislation. Only if we apply meaningful indicators on which we base our decision can we enable the European institutions to function in a sustainable way. This includes considering the impact of our policies on the prevention of diseases and fostering of health.

We want a European budget policy that serves the people. Our vision for the EU budget is one that reflects expectations and demands of citizen for what the European Union should deliver. In this sense, we want to equip the European Social Fund+ with sufficient resources, and provide the health programme inside the fund with meaningful resources in order to continue its role in boosting the cooperation between Member States in joint actions and knowledge sharing.

At the same time, we want to establish a framework regulation on European level to improve social security systems. Our goal is that all Member states improve their unemployment, pension and health insurance systems.

**What does your party plan to do to increase the budget allocation to address inequalities under ESF+? How do you intend to support the inclusion of a health programme that incorporates health inequalities, health promotions and disease prevention?**

**Answer:**

The budget of the European Social Fund+ will depend on the overall size of the future EU budget. In recent years, the European Council requested the European Union to do more in new priorities such as defence cooperation, migration policy and the management of the external EU borders. These new priorities need to be financed. That does not mean that well-

functioning existing programmes such as the ESF+ get less important. This is why we are convinced that the European budget needs to be bigger in the future.

The European Commission rightly put an emphasis on reducing administrative burden.

Applying EU funding should be accessible for all stakeholders. This gain of efficiency together with a clear focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals will ensure that the promotion of health and disease prevention will remain a priority of the EU budget.

## **2. Horizon Europe:**

**What does your party plan to do to increase and ring-fence investments (and access to them) for health research, including in health promotion and health equity, under Horizon Europe? How does your party intend to promote high-quality research in various areas of health promotion and disease prevention in the EU?**

### **Answer:**

Horizon Europe makes a range of provisions for health research. Most importantly, there is a dedicated cluster for health under pillar II, to which €7.7bn have been provisionally advocated. The S&D fully supports this emphasis on health, as well as the wide range of issues to be tackled under this heading. These issues include rare diseases, digital solutions for health care, and improving health care systems. Also, the open science approach, which the S&D has been strongly and successfully advocating, is especially meaningful in the context of health and can create opportunities for the development of new methods and cures.

## **3. InvestEU**

**What does your party plan to do to ensure that investments at fostering social infrastructures are included under the InvestEU programme?**

### **Answer:**

In the negotiations for the mandate of the new InvestEU that is set to be launched in 2021, we ensured that the primary goal of the fund would be to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our priority was to design InvestEU in a way that it does not support investment for the pure sake of investment, but rather to deliver a real societal added value.

Social policy will have a dedicated budget within InvestEU. This ensures that the fund will contribute to fostering social infrastructure among other policy goals. That being said, it is evident to us that loan instruments cannot replace the use of grant-based social policy instruments, as social projects are rarely profit-oriented. Other funds such as the European Social Fund+ remain highly relevant.

In the next legislature, we will have to define the size of the fund in the framework of the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. In order to ensure a sufficient financing of InvestEU and for social policy, we believe that the only way forward is an increased EU budget.

**What measures does your party plan to take to increase focus on health promotion and societal value of investments at EU level through EU funds and institutions?**

**Answer:**

The prominent consideration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in InvestEU should be the guiding principle for the upcoming negotiations on all other EU funding instruments. We want the European Commission to make an assessment for every budgetary and legislative decision and on the effects on the Sustainability Goals. Only if we apply meaningful indicators on which we base our decision can we enable the European institutions to function in a sustainable way.

Putting the Sustainable Development Goals at the centre of our policy-making provides the guarantee that the decisions we make today remain relevant tomorrow. Among others, the goal to ensure healthy lives and promoting the well-being at all ages is essential to sustainable development.

## **4. European Semester and European Pillar of Social Rights**

**What does your party plan to do to support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights both at national and local level?**

**How would you assess the role of the European Semester process in supporting public health reforms and their impact on social determinants of health in the EU? How would you and your party improve it?**

**Answer:**

The European pillar of social rights acknowledges 20 basic principles for the EU's social policy. Putting social concerns on the political agenda is a step in the right direction. But we are acutely aware that this is only the first step. These principles cannot be an end in itself. We want to effectively strengthen our social model, reduce inequalities, guarantee high social standards and strong collective bargaining all over Europe. It is now crucial to go ahead. Therefore we need to increase economic and social cohesion by implementing concrete initiatives to put the twenty principles into practice. Now, more than ever, we need an ambitious EU budget with a strong cohesion policy after 2020. The Multiannual Financial Framework 2021 – 2027 should deliver on the promises to build a fairer Europe and strengthen the social dimension of the EU. Furthermore local and regional authorities should be properly involved in the preparation and implementation of the next budget programmes.

## **5. Sustainable Development Goals**

**What does your party plan to contribute to strengthening public health at European and international level?**

**Answer:**

Our main goal is to improve access to affordable medicines for all European citizens. Insufficient access to essential medical products poses a serious threat to the well-being of a large section of the population in Europe. Ensuring that patients have access to essential and affordable medicines is one of the core objectives of the EU and our political family. Everyone has a right to good healthcare, so it is vital that medicines are available in the EU to all citizens at a fair, equitable and affordable price. Looking ahead to the next legislature, we will continue

to promote health policy issues such as the fight against antimicrobial resistance, immunization, eHealth and cross-border medical care. The implementation of the regulations on medical devices and on in-vitro diagnostic medical devices, as well as the conclusion of the regulation on health technologies, will also be important. Our primary objective is to protect patients from the authorization of defective or poorly tested drugs and medical devices. During our work, we included the sustainable development goals especially 3, 4, and 6 in the EU legislation, whenever we could. We will continue to work towards reaching these specific goals when it comes to health policy.

What further actions would your political party consider pursuing with, to better address the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU?

**Answer:**

There is no time left for procrastination. To this end, governance in Europe should be reformed and be framed by a sustainable development pact with economic, social and environmental targets and indicators on an equal footing. Therefore we need the SDG's as a framework for our common European Policy areas.

We aim the urgent need to establish a comprehensive and overarching pathway for the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the next legislative term. We call for a binding European strategy for the implementation of the SDG's. We need a coherent Commission strategy to ensure a level playing field in all policy areas. In addition we ask for an annual evaluation of the internal and external factors on the implementation of the SDG's within the EU.

For more information see European Commission recent release Reflection paper: Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030 [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-19-701\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-701_en.htm) and EuroHealthNet immediate response <https://eurohealthnet.eu/media/news-releases/reflections-are-not-enough-we-need-action-protect-human-and-planetary-health>