

EPF ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

EUROPE'S BUDGET On the 2028-2034 MFF

What is included in the toolkit?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. What is the MFF? | Page 2 |
| 2. What is the procedure and the timeline for the 2028-2034 MFF? | Page 2 |
| 3. What about public health & what is the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)? | Page 3 |
| 4. What are the potential impacts for public health and patient organisations? | Page 3 |
| 5. Key messages & outreach strategy | Page 4 |
| 6. Draft email to contact your Member States | Page 5 |
| 7. Relevant list of MEPs for the ECF | Page 6 |
| Draft email to contact your MEPs | Page 7 |
| Timeline for the ECF in the EP | Page 8 |

1. What is the MFF?

The 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is the European Union's long-term budget plan for the upcoming seven years.



- It doesn't list every single expense. Instead, it sets **maximum amounts (ceilings)** for each category.
- Then, each year, the EU makes a **detailed annual budget** within those limits.

2. What is the procedure and the timeline for the 2028-2034 MFF?



The European Commission proposed in July 2025:

- **The overall MFF regulation** (spending limits and priorities), and
- **The sectoral programmes** (detailed spending plans and foreseen activities for the priorities established in the MFF, such as the European Competitiveness Fund)



The Council of the EU, from 2025 to 2027, will:

- **Have to find a unanimous agreement** of all EU countries (on the MFF Regulation)
- **Decide together with the European Parliament** (on the Sectoral programmes)



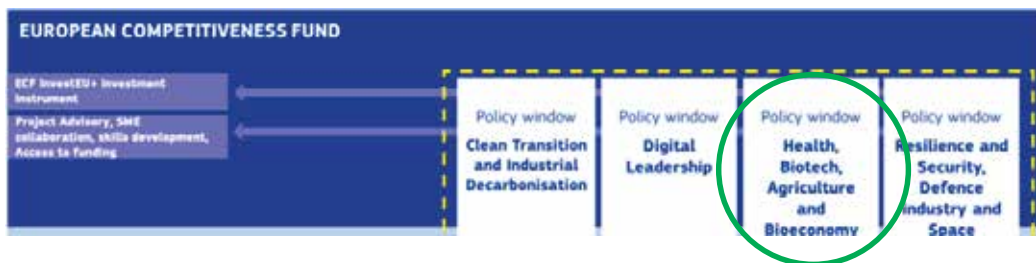
The European Parliament, from 2025 to 2027, will:

- **Have to give its consent** (on the unanimous agreement adopted by the Council of the EU on the MFF regulation)
- **Decide together with the Council of the EU** (on the Sectoral programmes)

2028 → The new 2028-2034 MFF enters into force

3. What about public health & what is the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)?

- In the 2021–2027 MFF, public health was primarily supported through the EU4Health programme which provided a dedicated funding instrument for building stronger, more resilient and more accessible health systems.
- In the European Commission's proposal for the 2028–2034 MFF, the standalone EU4Health programme would no longer exist and would be discontinued.
- Instead, its priorities should be integrated into the proposed European Competitiveness Fund (ECF). The ECF is designed to act as a central investment tool to strengthen the EU's position in strategic sectors and key technologies with the objective "to enhance the overall European competitiveness", including in healthcare.



- In the current ECF proposal, health does not have a separate and dedicate funding window and therefore does not have a dedicated fund → Health would have to share the proposed €22.6 billion with biotech, agriculture and bioeconomy.

4. What are the potential impacts for public health and patient organisations?

- Progressive disappearance of health as an EU priority: Removing the EU4Health programme risks weakening public health objectives, despite lessons from COVID-19.
- Unclear funding for health within the ECF: Without a dedicated budget, health must compete within other priorities, risking becoming an "adjustment variable".
- Uncertainty and lack of a holistic approach within the ECF: An approach to competitiveness that is too narrow may not take into account health resilience or the reduction of inequalities, viewing everything solely through the lens of industrial performance, with the risk of the disappearance of public health for the upcoming seven years.
- Lack of support for patient organisations: Without dedicated funding, patient organisations risk being unable to fulfil their role of representing and defending patients' priorities, needs and interests at a time when several pieces of health legislation are being implemented and negotiated.

5. Key messages & Outreach strategy



What needs to be said

The 2028-2034 MFF must ensure a robust and stable EU health budget: This budget should support action across the entire healthcare continuum, from prevention to equitable access to health services, placing equity and solidarity at its core.

In the absence of a dedicated public health programme in the 2028-2034 MFF, it is essential that (public) health within the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) is supported by a clearly ring-fenced budget: This funding must not be diluted by competing priorities such as agriculture, biotechnology, or the bioeconomy, and public health considerations must be meaningfully integrated into all relevant activities.

Securing dedicated and predictable long-term funding for patient organisations is also a top priority: Building on the operating grant model, such funding enables these organisations to deliver sustained impact and effectively represent patient interests over time.

There is a serious risk that public health will effectively disappear from the EU agenda for the next seven-year period: As it stands, there is no dedicated public health programme, and the ECF does not comprehensively cover key public health areas such as prevention, health literacy, and equitable access to medicines. This creates a real risk that public health priorities will be significantly weakened, or even completely eliminated, in the 2028–2034 MFF.



Who you should contact

Contact your Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Industry:

Reaching out to the Ministry of Health and, importantly, the Ministry of Finance (for the MFF Regulation) and Ministry of Industry (for the ECF) can help influence discussions at EU level by understanding the position of your country and by shaping your government's position in the Council of the EU. You may also consider contacting national health attachés within Permanent Representations to better understand your country's stance, as well as the positions of other Member States.

Contact MEPs who are working on the ECF: The European Parliament will have greater influence over the ECF while its role in the MFF is limited to approval (see above). However, all MEPs can play a role in shaping discussions, including through their political groups where key priorities are often debated. While a list is provided below, you are encouraged to reach out to additional MEPs who may have an interest, especially those from your country.

Raise awareness through social and traditional media: Social media can help with the dissemination of messages, amplify visibility, and engage diverse audiences. It can help build momentum and create a sense of community around key issues. In addition, engaging with national media is highly recommended. EU Health topics are often underreported at national level, despite their significant impact, and increased media attention (on the potential absence of public health aspects within the future MFF / the absence of support for patient organisations) can help drive awareness and influence national public and political debate.

6. Draft email to contact your Member States

>Feel free to adapt this email when translating it into your national language

Subject:

Request for a meeting: Securing a strong EU public health dimension in the 2028–2034 MFF

Dear **(Name)**,

On behalf of **(Name of your organisation)**, representing patients in **(your country)**, I am writing to request a meeting regarding the ongoing negotiations on the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in the Council of the European Union.

We are seriously concerned by the European Commission's July 2025 proposal to discontinue the standalone EU4Health programme and to integrate some aspects of health into the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), within a window that also covers agriculture, biotech, and the bioeconomy.

From our perspective, the removal of a dedicated EU4Health programme and the absence of a clearly ring-fenced public health component within the ECF risk undermining EU public health objectives. While the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of EU cooperation in health, there is a real risk, if the current structure is maintained, that health will be treated as the "adjustment variable" in budgetary trade-offs, especially as politically prioritised sectors such as agriculture can easily take precedence.

While strengthening competitiveness in health, including reducing dependencies on third countries, is important, it cannot substitute for a comprehensive and sustained public health approach. **A credible and forward-looking MFF must ensure stable investment across the healthcare continuum, from prevention to access to care, grounded in equity and solidarity for all patients within the EU.**

At present, however, **the direction of discussions raises serious concerns that public health could be effectively absent from the next seven-year budget cycle.** This would not only leave patient priorities insufficiently addressed but also weaken the foundations for a healthy and resilient population across Europe.

In this context, we would welcome your views and the opportunity to discuss the following points in a meeting:

- The need for a strong, standalone EU health programme within the MFF;
- In the absence of a standalone programme, a robust framework should be established within the ECF that safeguards health as a distinct policy priority. This framework should be supported by a dedicated budget, and it should be agreed that public health objectives will also be covered as part of ECF activities, leading to a holistic approach to "health competitiveness"
- The importance of continued structural support for patient organisations, as weakening this support risks marginalising patient voices, particularly at a time when significant health legislation is being negotiated and implemented.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in the coming weeks to discuss these issues and explore how **(your country)** can contribute to securing a robust and future-proof EU public health framework.

Sincerely - **(Your name and the name of your organisation)**

7. Relevant list of MEPs for the ECF + draft email to contact your MEPs + timeline for the ECF in the EP

MEP name	Country	Political Group	Email
ITRE Committee (Committee in charge of the ECF in the EP – you can have access to the members and substitutes here)			
Christian EHLER (co-rapporteur)	Germany	EPP	christian.ehler@europarl.europa.eu
Dan NICA (co-rapporteur)	Romania	S&D	dan.nica@europarl.europa.eu
Yvan VEROUGSTRAETE (shadow rapporteur)	Belgium	Renew	yvan.verougstraete@europarl.europa.eu
Benedetta SCUDERI (shadow rapporteur)	Italy	The Greens	benedetta.scuderi@europarl.europa.eu
Marc BOTENGA (shadow rapporteur)	Belgium	The Left	marcjohan.botenga@europarl.europa.eu
Borys BUDKA (Chair of the ITRE Committee)	Poland	EPP	borys.budka@europarl.europa.eu
Tsvetelina PENKOVA (Vice-Chair of the ITRE Committee)	Bulgaria	S&D	tsvetelina.penkova@europarl.europa.eu
Giorgio GORI (Vice-Chair of the ITRE Committee)	Italy	S&D	giorgio.gori@europarl.europa.eu
Wouter BEKE (former Flemish Minister for Welfare, Public health)	Belgium	EPP	wouter.beke@europarl.europa.eu
Nicolás GONZÁLEZ CASARES (member of the SANT Committee)	Spain	S&D	nicolas.casares@europarl.europa.eu
Adam JARUBAS (Chair of the SANT Committee)*	Poland	EPP	adam.jarubas@europarl.europa.eu
Thomas PELLERIN-CARLIN*	France	S&D	thomas.pellerin-carlin@europarl.europa.eu
Anthony SMITH*	France	The Left	anthony.smith@europarl.europa.eu
Dario TAMBURRANO*	Italy	The Left	dario.tamburrano@europarl.europa.eu
Matej TONIN*	Slovenia	EPP	matej.tonin@europarl.europa.eu
Christophe CLERGEAU**	France	S&D	christophe.clergeau@europarl.europa.eu
Michalis HADJIPANTELA***	Cyprus	EPP	michael.hadjipantela@europarl.europa.eu
Catarina MARTINS***	Portugal	The Left	catarina.martins@europarl.europa.eu
Marie TOUSSAINT*	France	The Green	marie.toussaint@europarl.europa.eu

*Signed the letter supporting OGs for patient organisations / public health interest

**Led the letter supporting OGs for patient organisations / public health interest

***In the past has spoken out strongly in favour of the EU4Health program

BUDGET Committee (Committee for budgetary assessment)

Stine BOSSE*	Denmark	Renew	stine.bosse@europarl.europa.eu
--------------	---------	-------	--------------------------------

*Signed the letter supporting OGs for patient organisations / public health interest

>Feel free to adapt this email when translating it into your national language

Subject:

Request for meeting on the ECF and its "Public Health" dimensions

Dear (**Name of the MEP**),

On behalf of (**Name of your organisation**), representing patients in (**your country**), I am writing to request a meeting with you to discuss the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF), currently under negotiation in the European Parliament within the ITRE Committee, and to share our proposed amendments.

*We are seriously concerned by the European Commission's proposal to discontinue the standalone EU4Health programme and to integrate aspects of health into the ECF, within a window that also covers agriculture, biotech, and the bioeconomy. From our perspective, removing a dedicated EU4Health programme and failing to ensure a clearly ring-fenced public health component within the ECF risks undermining EU public health objectives. While the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of EU cooperation in health, there is a real risk that, if the current structure is maintained, health will be treated as the "adjustment variable" in budgetary trade-offs, particularly as politically prioritised sectors such as agriculture take precedence. **A dedicated health window with a clear and robust budget is therefore essential in the future ECF.***

***Moreover, a holistic approach to "health competitiveness" must be ensured.** Competitiveness should not be understood solely in industrial or technological terms, but also in relation to health literacy (empowering patients to understand, access, and use health information to make informed decisions) as well as equitable access to innovations supported under the ECF as developing new technologies, treatments or cures has limited value if they do not effectively reach the patients they are intended to benefit or if patients are not equipped to access and use them. In this context, continued structural support for patient organisations is also crucial, as weakening this support risks marginalising patient voices, particularly at a time when significant health legislation is being negotiated and implemented.*

*We also note that the European Parliament Committee on Budgets, in its interim report adopted end of April on the 2028–2034 MFF, raised concerns about the potential dilution of EU4Health priorities. Its call to earmark €10.05 billion within the ECF for EU4Health-related actions highlights the importance of maintaining a strong and clearly identifiable health dimension. **We strongly encourage you to support this approach in the ongoing ITRE negotiations to ensure consistency within the Parliament and to effectively safeguard public health.***

The patient community is counting on your support to ensure that public health remains a core priority in the future EU budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I remain at your disposal to arrange a meeting at your convenience and to discuss how to support our amendments to better protect patient priorities and public health.

Sincerely,

(**Your name and the name of your organisation**)

TIMELINE IN THE EP FOR THE ECF

Presentation of draft report	6 May 2026
Deadline for tabling amendments	11 May 2026
Vote in ITRE Committee (indicative)	10 September 2026