[Press release – Parliament gives green light for new EU4Health programme](#)

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Parliament endorsed the provisional agreement reached with the Council with 631 votes in favour, 32 against and 34 abstentions.

The new EU4Health programme will contribute in areas where the EU can clearly add value, thus complementing member states' policies. Its main objectives include strengthening health systems by supporting countries to coordinate with each other and share data, as well as making medicines and medical devices more available, accessible and affordable.

Tackle cross-border health threats more efficiently

As the goal is to make health systems more resilient, EU4Health will prepare them more thoroughly for major cross-border health threats. This should enable the EU to face not only future epidemics, but also long-term challenges such as an ageing population and health inequalities.

The programme will also support actions linked to e-health and the creation of the [European "health data space"](#). Promoting access to quality healthcare, including access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, improving mental health and accelerating the [fight against cancer](#) will also be supported.

During the plenary debate on Tuesday, MEPs highlighted the key role that the new programme will play in fighting health inequalities, both between member

states and between different social groups. They also welcomed the establishment at EU level of a stockpile of essential medical supplies and equipment, which complements the work being done under rescEU, and a reserve of medical and support staff to be mobilised in the event a health crisis. Watch a recording of the debate [here](#).

Next steps

Once Council has also formally approved the regulation, it will enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. The regulation will apply retroactively from 1 January 2021.

Background

In May 2020, the Commission put forward a new stand-alone [EU4Health Programme for 2021-2027](#), as a response to the COVID-19 crisis. EU4Health aims to help the EU to be better prepared for major cross-border health threats and to make national health systems more resilient. Parliament and Council reached a [compromise agreement](#) on 14 December 2020.