

CHARTER OF ROME

HEALTH AS A STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN EUROPE

Preamble

As representatives of the National Medical Orders of **France** (*Conseil national de l'Ordre des Médecins - CNOM*), **Germany** (*Bundesärztekammer - Bäk*), **Greece** (*Panhellenic Medical Association - PIS*), **Italy** (*Federazione Nazionale degli Ordini dei Medici Chirurghi e degli Odontoiatri - FNOMCeO*), **Portugal** (*Ordem dos Médicos*) and **Spain** (*Organización Médica Colegial - OMC*), we recognize health as a fundamental right enshrined in Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and as a pillar of social cohesion and economic sustainability. The evolving challenges in medicine and demography – from population aging the rise in chronic diseases, to cross-border health crises – impose pressures on health systems that cannot be overlooked or neglected. We believe that health must be considered as a strategic priority for the socially and economically resilient systems.

It is necessary to change the paradigm and the way we think about healthcare: no longer as a cost but as an investment, especially as it relates to activities that reduce the impact of future health needs by anticipating them. To achieve this goal, however, it is necessary to reexamine healthcare spending and to ensure that it is protected from cost-cutting measures at the European level that could compromise the quality of health care delivery and the resilience of health systems.

As doctors, who work to protect the health of European citizens, we propose this “Charter” to redefine healthcare spending as an essential investment and an instrument of social resilience. We aim to raise awareness in the European Union and the Member States of the urgency of considering healthcare spending as a strategic investment to guarantee the future of our societies.

HEALTH AND PREVENTION AS PRIORITY AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS AT EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL LEVEL

- **WE INVITE** Member States to include health investment plans in their medium-term budgetary plans as part of the New Economic Governance Framework, with a specific focus on prevention and the management of chronic diseases.

- **WE ASK** the European Commission to acknowledge the role of healthcare spending as a structural investment in the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSR), and to recognize its positive impact on productivity, social cohesion and fiscal sustainability.
- **WE SUPPORT** the expansion of the EU4Health program (Regulation (EU) 2021/522) and the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 so that European resources can integrate national efforts to strengthen health systems and promote the protection of public health.
- **WE BELIEVE** that prevention and management of chronic diseases, from vaccination programs, early screening, from primary to secondary prevention, reduces future health expenditures and improves the ability of health systems to respond to crises. Early diagnosis and treatment of chronic diseases not only improve patients' quality of life but also reduce overall health system costs.
- **WE PROPOSE**, therefore, that healthcare spending destined for prevention and management of chronic diseases be considered as an investment for social resilience and a budget priority.
- **WE URGE** the Council and the Commission, in negotiations on the medium-term budget plan, to introduce a "health resilience clause" that allows Member States to allocate additional resources to prevention and management of chronic diseases without violating European parameters.
- **WE ASK** that this mechanism be monitored through specific indicators, defined in collaboration with national health authorities and the World Health Organization.

ROLE OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAL ORDERS

- **WE REAFFIRM** our commitment to collaborate with national and European authorities to strive toward resilient, equitable and sustainable health systems, in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity enshrined in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).
- **WE COMMIT**, where relevant and appropriate, to providing data, studies and recommendations to European and national institutions to support the implementation of this "Charter", contributing to the definition of health priorities in public budgets.
- **WE COMMIT** to raising citizens' awareness of the importance of prevention by promoting a health culture that strengthens trust in health systems and public policies.

• **WE OFFER** our experience to collaborate with the European Parliament, the Commission, the Council, the national parliaments and governments in reviewing existing regulations so that health is placed at the center of the Union's economic strategies.

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**ORDEM
DOS MÉDICOS**

Carlos CORTES

*President
Ordem dos Medicos*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carlos Cortes".

OMC



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