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Brussels,

Subject: EU4Health Annual Work Programme 2025

Dear Members of Childhood Cancer International – Europe,

On behalf of President von der Leyen, I would like to thank you for your open letter of 15 September 2025 expressing the importance of maintaining strong patient representation in EU health policymaking and the need for dedicated funding. Your efforts and commitment to enhancing the wellbeing and quality of life for children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer, as well as their families, is truly commendable.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is giving childhood cancer a strong focus, supported by dedicated funding through the EU4Health Programme. This support enables paediatric and youth cancer organisations to implement concrete projects that bring real benefits to young cancer patients, survivors, and their families.

We deeply appreciate Childhood Cancer International – Europe's active role in key EU4Health co-financed initiatives like EU-CAYAS-NET, YARN, and IMPACT-EU and other actions (EUR 2.75 million), which enhance youth cancer advocacy and psychosocial support. We encourage ongoing stakeholder engagement and look forward to continuing our collaboration through action grants.

The EU4Health Annual Work Programme 2025 contributes significantly to actions addressing crucial healthcare needs within the EU, such as crisis preparedness, prevention and treatment of diseases, health systems and healthcare workforce, digital as well as flagship actions such as the Beating Cancer Plan and those addressing the new priorities 2025-2029 on cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases.

As you are aware, the initial budget for the EU4Health Programme of EUR 5.8 billion for the years 2021-2027 was reduced to EUR 4.6 billion following the revision of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework. The budgetary cut - which concerns EU4Health Annual Work Programmes from 2025 onwards - has significant consequences influencing the scale of planned health initiatives and impacting the implementation of EU health actions.

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Concerning operating grants, I would like to clarify that such grants have not been included in the EU4Health Annual Work Programme 2025. Therefore, it is not possible to launch a call for full-year operating grants for European civil society organisations within this 2025 Work Programme.

NGOs and civil society groups continue to play an important role for the European healthcare sector. This role is well recognised in the EU4Health Programme, as well as in the 2025 Annual Work Programme, which entails many actions that are open to NGOs and civil society groups. These actions should enable cross-stakeholder collaboration on important healthcare topics such as cardiovascular health, cancer, pandemic preparedness, antimicrobial resistance, digital health, and many more.

Your involvement is crucial to our shared mission, and we remain committed to supporting your efforts within the constraints we face.

Yours sincerely,



Oliver Várhelyi

