

MANIFESTO
MÉDECINS DU MONDE

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2019

Doctors of the World – Médecins du Monde (MdM) is an international movement committed to combatting inequalities in health and securing access to protection, decent living conditions and optimum medical care for all. This combat is led on the ground with people facing barriers to healthcare to ensure their rights are respected, and through advocacy with French, European and international institutions.

MdM defends a vision of a just and inclusive Europe - a Europe that places the core values and goals of human dignity, equality, freedom and solidarity at the heart of its action. In the run-up to the European elections, MdM is campaigning for vastly different demands and priorities for the European project.

Health in Europe. Noble but often flouted principles

A fundamental right enshrined in the very essence of the European project, the entitlement to health protection is set out in Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights on the right to life. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union also states: «a high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Union policies and activities».

However, noble principles cannot conceal the fact that European Union member States and institutions do not abide by their own rules. Considerable inequalities in health persist not only between member States but also within them, often depending on factors such as where people live, their social, administrative and economic situations, and even their origins.

New and/or innovative drugs are unavailable to many because of their high cost and a general lack of transparency, obstacles to access to sexual health services – including the right to voluntary termination of pregnancy – still exist for citizens of some European countries. People using drugs or sex workers continue to be the target of repressive policies, which adds to their vulnerability and puts their health at even greater risk. Meanwhile, the European Union and its member States continue to put up walls and turn their collective backs on people seeking to reach Europe's shores left to drown in the Mediterranean.

87 million Europeans live below the poverty line, i.e. 17% of EU inhabitants
> Eurostat 2015

11 million of 220 million families are deprived of a personal home
> FEANTSA 2018

65% is the gap in the health performance index between The Netherlands and Romania (calculated on the basis of user perception)
> Euro Health Consumer Index 2018

Principles are not enough. Europe can and must do better! MdM advocates for a Europe that defends the right to equality, health, dignity, integrity and emancipation of all citizens, regardless of who they are.

MdM advocates for a fair and inclusive Europe

- All citizens, without discrimination or preference, must be able to achieve the best health possible, have access to optimal medical care and benefit from shared, solidarity-based social protection. The European Union and its member States must ensure unconditional access to healthcare in accordance with the right to universal social protection. To cite one example, in June 2018 Spain's government responded to a public health need and reinstated the right of undocumented migrants to access the country's universal health system.
- All citizens must be afforded the opportunity to live and thrive in a health-giving, protective environment where health takes precedence over private concerns. Climate change and its impact on the environment must be addressed immediately, as this has a significant effect on health and contributes to the worsening of chronic diseases. Time has run out for prevarication and compromise.

- Europe must allow everyone to live their identities and practices as they see fit. The European Union must oppose all forms of discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation while ensuring all women and girls are afforded the fundamental right to control their own bodies and sexuality, which includes access to voluntary termination of pregnancy.
- The European Union must take ongoing action to ensure all its policies are geared towards an effective reduction in social and health inequalities, both within and between member States.

MdM advocates for a Europe promoting dignity and humanity

- Europe must stand up to the deleterious effects of populism grounded on hatred, fear and rejection of others, within and beyond its borders. Promotion of, respect for and safeguarding of human rights for all must inform each and every one of its actions.
- Europe must make the fight against exclusion and poverty, both of which are major determinants of health, a priority for action and guarantee unconditional access to decent accommodation. Finland, the only country where the proactive «Housing First» policy has been implemented and the only one where in the past ten years homelessness has declined, is proof that solutions exist. It is a question of political will: the European Parliament can take action to promote such initiatives to combat exclusion..
- Europe must protect the most vulnerable, in particular children whose health and safety are at risk. Whether they live in slums or squats, on the street, with family or alone, whether European citizens or foreign nationals every minor must be provided access to healthcare, education and protection. Particular attention must be afforded to unaccompanied minors who endure harrowing conditions along their migratory route and when they reach Europe.
- The European Union and its member States must not leave migrants to die at Europe's borders, in the mountains or the Mediterranean. Those who do finally manage to reach European soil cannot be left to a rootless existence on the streets, with no assistance available to them.
- Not content with putting up even more barriers to sea search and rescue operations deployed by aid organisations, Europe's leaders have stepped up their support to Libya. It is as vital to put an end to this policy that endangers lives as it is urgent to re-introduce rescue operations in the Mediterranean and

set up a long-term reception policy for those who are rescued.

- Everyday we are witness to how the Dublin Regulation makes people even more vulnerable and its impact on health. The Regulation must be reformed on the basis of effective solidarity between member States.
- A European asylum system guided solely by the necessity to protect people can be put in place. Such a system must be independent of any considerations European Union Interior Ministries may have as to their own immigration policies.
- Instituting safe and legal routes to countries within the European Union is the only way to ensure individuals are guaranteed their fundamental rights and stop deaths on Europe's borders.

MdM advocates for a more democratic Europe, especially in terms of health

- European Union institutions must be closer to Europe's citizens, and these citizens must be given a voice – a voice that has to be heard. Civil society organisations must contribute to shaping public policy, particularly that relating, however indirectly, to health. They must be given support so that their voices are heard over those of private interests.
- The rights of citizens, including to health, are set out in European treaties. They must be more directly and rapidly actionable so that all can invoke their rights.
- The European directive on trade secrets preventing citizens from being informed about issues that have a decisive role in policies directly impacting their lives and health must be amended. It is unacceptable for European citizens to be unaware of the determinants of drug prices that are protected by this directive, as these jeopardise not only the equilibrium of health systems but also universal access to medical care.
- EU member States, the European Parliament and the Commission can all act to enhance Europe's health governance and ensure it becomes a real priority.



MdM campaigns for a forward-thinking Europe, capable of translating its principles and values into concrete actions.

Europe's Parliament can act to construct a more social and democratic Europe protective not only of its citizens, their rights and health, but also the environment.

We expect no less from the members of the European Parliament. This is the commitment MdM wishes to propose to those standing for election and the parties they represent.