



## *Coherent EU policies*

### **The coherence of EU policies impacting health and social care is to be increased.**

All countries face dramatic increases in the incidence of chronic illnesses, many of which occur later in life. Significant advances in science and technology have helped to alleviate the pain and suffering, although cures for cancer, diabetes, heart disease and respiratory conditions remain a distant goal. These innovations translate into higher health expenditures as an ever-increasing number of people require surgery, or access to medical devices, or are required to take medicines for the rest of their lives. The prognosis is difficult to deny. Demographic shifts over the next few decades could lead to unprecedented financial issues in society where populations are ageing and succumb more frequently to chronic diseases.

The healthcare sector is aware of this shift and has prepared adaptation.

A key issue at European level is however the clear need for coherence and articulation between the hospital and healthcare sector and the social sector. HOPE believes that there is a particular significance to put this debate at EU level since different initiatives of the Commission are leading to fragmented approaches: hospital and healthcare on one side and social care on the other.

There are serious contradictions in the design of some policies; particularly visible in the debates around mental health, around cross-border care, as well as around services of general interest and in particular social services of general interest.

HOPE urges the EU decision makers to avoid handling those issues separately when the population is ageing and will need better coordination between all social and health activities would be a mistake. It makes no sense to have complex system if they do not answer to the basic needs.

*The European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE) is the voice of the hospital and healthcare sector in Europe. It gathers 36 national associations of public and private hospitals and owners of hospitals in 28 Member States of the European Union and two other European countries. It represents around 80% of hospital care in the EU.*

*HOPE was created in 1966 around the European idea recognizing the need of discussing across borders on the way systems are organized and function. HOPE has then been actively and constructively involved in the development of collaborations, partnerships and exchanges. With a growing impact of the EU policies on hospitals and healthcare services during the last 20 years, HOPE has been both vigilant and active.*

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