

Roadmap for the European Year 2018-2019

of the 'European Network against Privatization and Commercialization of Health and Social Protection'

ALL FOR HEALTH

One year to say no
to the commodification of health



Combating commodification of health in Europe

Every year, the "European network against privatization and commercialization of health and social protection" organises a day of action on the World Health Day, on the 7th of April. Through its actions, the network seeks to put an end to the commodification of health, which continues to progress in all European countries.

During the recent World Health Day, the network coordinated actions in 69 cities around the world with hundreds of organisations, networks, collectives, delegations, trade unions and political parties.

A European campaign towards the May 2019 elections

In view of the European elections in May 2019, the European Network launched the European Health Campaign *All for health: One year to say no to the commodification of health*.

The European Union is imposing a policy of austerity and aggressive liberalization on its Member States, causing disinvestments in health and social protection.

Private insurance companies are gradually replacing our solidarity-based health systems. Health services are increasingly outsourced to commercial companies, thereby increasing costs for patients without being able to guarantee quality care. The system of patents and secret agreements with the pharmaceutical industry is causing excessive increases in the price of medication for patients and huge profits for the pharmaceutical corporations.

The commercialisation of health care leads to economic and territorial inequalities in access to quality care.

Let's act together!

The European Health Network calls for a joint effort to ensure the success of this campaign. We will do this by challenging our MEPs, raising public awareness and mobilizing the public.

The campaign's demands are new and additional investments in high-quality and accessible health care for the entire population, free from commercial operators. Although the European Union is not directly responsible for health, it has a duty to integrate health protection into all of its policies in order to ensure that health systems are accessible and effective for the entire population.

In particular, the European Health Network plans to organise collective action against the commodification of health and social protection. By coordinating this social struggle in view of the European elections, the coalition aims to make progress in the following areas:

1. The negative impact of **prolonged austerity** policies on:

- the quality of health care through **outsourcing or subcontracting of health services**. Market logic is widely used to deliver immediate profits which reduces the quality of care. Well-defined rules are imposed to minimise personnel costs and increase their employability, resulting in downward pressure on staff working conditions.
- the **geographical, financial and cultural accessibility** of health. A growing proportion of the European population is being forced to postpone or even give up care altogether. Citizens are confronted with an increase of the *out of pocket*, i.e. the share of the costs borne by the patient. The supply of care in rural areas is decreasing. The complexity of health care systems, the reimbursement system and the lack of knowledge of social rights, etc. make health care systems inaccessible to vulnerable groups of the population.

2. **Internal, fiscal and trade policies**. Current policies promote the growth of private insurance companies and encourage competition between non-commercial and commercial health services through public procurement procedures in the health sector. In the case of commercial insurance companies, those who pay the most will receive the best care, thereby increasing health inequalities. This is diametrically opposed to the principle of solidarity and the idea that health is a common good. It is a vision in which health is a marketable commodity between individuals and suppliers on a commercial market.

3. The **system of patents and secret agreements between the Member States and the pharmaceutical industry** is driving up the prices of medicines. At the same time, the European Union strengthens the system of patents through free trade agreements. It also subsidizes financing pharmaceutical multinationals through providing Research and Development grants for innovative medication, without asking for any reimbursements of such subsidies.

The European campaign for non-commercial health and social protection for all, step by step

1) June - September 2018:

The national coordinations of the European Health Network submit their demands to their country's Members of European Parliament. Partner organisations are contacted in order to provoke a debate and reactions. These are used for further developing the demands.

2) September - October 2018:

- a) Completing a joint set of demands addressed to candidates for European elections
- b) Developing communication strategy and tools

3. October 2018 - March 2019:

Developing a dynamic of awareness-raising, mobilization and interpellation around the set of demands through the national coordinations, with two main benchmarks:

- a) A week of regional debates
- b) A European day of action on 7 April 2019

4) April - May 2019:

Convergence towards a mobilization dynamic and interpellations at the European level

