

**Workplan 2020-2025**

An Investment in Economy of Wellbeing:

Healthy Women, Healthy Europe

***European Institute of Women’s Health, CLG***

*Dublin, Ireland*

*Register Charity Number 20035167*

*CHY Number 12184*

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**Our Mission**

Founded in 1996, the European Institute of Women’s Health (EIWH) is a non-governmental organisation that uses an evidence-based approach to advocate for an equitable, sex- and gender-sensitive approach in health policy, research, promotion, treatment and care.

The EIWH promotes medical and socio-economic research that addresses sex and gender-based differences to ensure access to quality treatment and care for women and their families across their lifespan. The EIWH strives to reduce inequities by drawing policymaker’s attention to the obstacles that women in minority, migrant, refugee and socio-economic disadvantaged groups face. The Institute works to empower women to play an active part in their health management.

**Why Women’s Health?**

The promotion of sex and gender equity has been a long-standing theme in the philosophy and operations of the EU. In line with Articles 160 and 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the EIWH calls on the EU to commit to the reduction of health inequalities and provide equitable health for all.

Biological and social influences (sex and gender) are critical to health. Women face higher rates of some diseases than do men. Other diseases affect men and women differently. Women do not present the same for conditions and respond differently to treatment than do men. Many factors outside of the health sector—such as socioeconomic status, education, culture and ethnicity—also affect behaviour and resource access. Strategies must account for these differences.

Under the new European Commission and European Parliament, policymakers will focus on sectors crucial to growth, competitiveness and job creation. The Finnish EU Presidency’s main social and health theme is the ‘Economy of Wellbeing,’ which examines gender equal economies and gender mainstreaming. Wellbeing and economic policies are closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Economic growth improves people’s wellbeing, and a healthy population enhance economic growth and stability. A comprehensive, inclusive Europe must prioritise women’s health**.**

The UN’s Fourth World Conference adopted the Beijing Declaration in September 1995, committing to gender equality, women’s empowerment and social justice. In celebration of the Beijing Declaration’s twenty-fifth anniversary in 2020, five years of the UN’s Social Development Goals (SDGs) in 2020, and the EIWH’s own twenty-fifth anniversary in 2021, the EIWH work programme will profile gender equality across different policy areas throughout Europe.



**Our Priorities, 2020-2025**

The EIWH promotes an equitable, sex and gender-sensitive approach to health policy, research, treatment and care:

1. *Prioritising women’s health in EU policy, programming and funding mechanisms*
2. *Establishing a women’s health interest group in the European Parliament*
3. *Promoting and expanding EIWH’s national focal points*
4. *Supporting Member States and EU stakeholders in championing women’s health*
5. *Increasing the evidence and advocacy base for women’s health issues through publications (PBs) and social media*
6. *Partnering with EU organisations, efforts and activities, such as, EMA, ECDC on Antibiotics Awareness Day and European Immunisation Week*
7. *Capacity-building by expanding EIWH communications and Network membership*
8. *Diversifying and increasing EIWH funding*

**Health Promotion and Disease Prevention:**

**Right from the Start**

Early intervention is key to improving women and family health and wellbeing.  Action must be taken early and at critical points to ensure health and wellbeing from childhood through old age.

Available evidence must be used to best identify entry points for various interventions specific to girls and women throughout their life.  Health inequities should be reduced by integrating sex and gender considerations into health promotion and disease prevention, programming and policy, drawing attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Key topics include vaccination, antimicrobial resistance, safe use of medicine during pregnancy, chronic disease prevention, screening promotion and health literacy.



**Structure of Activities, 2020-2025**

In follow-up to the EIWH 2017 anniversary conference and launch of its 2018 Manifesto for Women’s Health, the EIWH began the ‘Healthy Women–Healthy Europe’ campaign with an information and awareness-raising EU event in the European Parliament on the 6th November 2019. 2019 marked the renewal of the European Parliament and the European Commission. Throughout 2019, the EIWH work focused on the ‘Economy of Wellbeing’ in line with the central health and social theme of the EU Finnish Presidency.

The EIWH hosted the ‘Healthy Women-Healthy Europe’ Information Day in the Europe Parliament with the support of MEPs Ms. Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP, Finland). Other MEPs presented included Evelyn Regner (S&D, AU), Mairead McGuinness (EP, IE), and Irene Tolleret (Renew, FR). The event illustrated how a comprehensive, inclusive Europe must prioritise women’s health. The speakers included MEPs, the European Commission (DG Research and Innovation, DG Health and Food Safety, DG Education, Culture, Youth and Sport) and WHO-Europe, looked at the need to promote women’s and family health in Europe 2020 through a life-course approach. The Austrian’s Women’s Health Action Plan and the Irish Women’s Health Task Force added concrete examples of how to move from policy into action at a national and local levels.

**Structure of Activities, 2020-2025**

Our ten major planned activities initiating in 2020:

1. *Women’s Health Interest Group in European Parliament*
2. *Preparing EIWH 25th Anniversary International Conference (2021/2022)*
3. *Engagement of EU Member States, National Focal Points and Network Membership*
4. *Corporate Supporter Programme*
5. *Maternal Health Report and Network*
6. *Women and Alzheimer Advisory Council*
7. *Older Women’s Health and Neurological Disorders Report*
8. *Communication and Advocacy*
9. *Publications and Consultations*
10. *Preparations for 2021/2022*



**1. Women’s Health Interest Group in the European Parliament**

The EIWH will spend 2020, in recognition of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Convention, setting up a Women’s Health Interest Group in the European Parliament. The European Parliament Interest Group on Women’s Health will reach out and mobilise a wide circle of MEPs to effectively communicate the key messages and foster broader MEP support.

We will continue to reach out to re-elected MEPs who have been women’s health supporters over the past years as well as new MEPs who have shown an interest in health and gender issues. A number of them have already supported the EIWH Women’s Health Manifesto and will be invited to become the core founding members of the EU Parliament Women's Health Interest Group.

**Key Action Points—Interest Group**

1. *Generate Terms of Reference.*
2. *Prepare a background briefing.*
3. *Map the gaps in women’s health in Europe in a multilingual and accessible document in order to build momentum.*
4. *Meet with leading MEPs.*
5. *Draft a five-year work plan on specific topics and targets on women’s health.*
6. *Launch the draft work plan for consultation in the European Parliament.*
7. *Identify expert presentations to the Interest Group.*
8. *Plan event in the European Parliament.*
9. *Map out the work of the Secretariat to the Interest Group and schedule its meetings.*
10. *Determine the Interest group’s Chair and Vice-Chair.*
11. *Draft Interest Group work programme mandate.*



**2. EIWH 25th Anniversary Conference (2021/2022)**

In 2020, the EIWH will begin planning the International conference on Gender Equity and Women’s Health. In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration (2020) and the EIWH’s 25th anniversary, the conference in 2021/2022 will bring together experts to review progress made and set the agenda for the future.

This conference is intended to provide further input and commitment for developing a European Women’s Health Agenda.

**Key Action Points—Conference**

1. *Establish a conference steering group with key stakeholders and thought leaders.*
2. *Secure funding for the conference.*
3. *Identify conference organiser and venue.*
4. *Develop format of conference with steering group, including targeting a diverse range of delegates representative of the EU which can be delivered in-person or in a virtual format.*
5. *Identify key speakers, themes and location for the conference.*
6. *Partner with the media and key influencers for publicity in build up to the event.*
7. *Organise high-profile social event/s in conjunction with the conference.*



**3. Engagement of EU Member States, National Focal Points and Network Members**

For maximum impact, the EIWH is working to continue link as well as strengthen its European and national activities. To that end, we will distribute the EIWH Manifesto to health attachés and other Member State representatives in order to increase awareness.

The Institute of Public Health in Austria and Charité (in Berlin, Germany) are the first EIWH focal points and set an example of how further national focal points can be developed. The EIWH has identified further potential focal points and developed a terms of reference document for use in all Member States.

The future EIWH Network will consist of an extensive multi-national, multi-disciplinary network of patient groups, NGOs, researchers, gender experts, politicians, policymakers, and healthcare professionals spanning starting with a few EU Member States. Their Members are consulted on a regular basis.

**Key Action Points—Engagement**

1. *Add new focal points yearly to represent the diversity across Member States.*
2. *Partner with focal points and Members on key thematic topics and action points at Member State and European levels.*
3. *Consult focal points and Members for expert advice and engagement.*
4. *Identify potential EIWH focal points in additional Member States.*
5. *Create a Members-only site on the EIWH website for collaboration, networking and communication.*
6. *Organise an annual event in partnership with a focal point.*
7. *Follow-up on the EIWH Manifesto and work programme the new EU Commission, European stakeholders and key national governments, particularly those hosting future EU presidencies or where the EIWH already has established national contacts (e.g. Ireland, Austria and Germany).*
8. *Increase awareness at domestic level with Member State representatives through in-person meetings, material dissemination and event organisation.*
9. *Work with focal points & membership to increase awareness at national level.*
10. *Ensure women’s health topics are included in upcoming presidency priorities and the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on gender and health (social determinants of health and well-being).*



**4. Corporate Supporter Programme**

The EIWH recognises that it could not conduct its work without generous support from donors and sponsors. The EIWH is launching a new programme open to potential donors and sponsors who will become EIWH Corporate Supporters.

Those who share the principles and ambitions of the EIWH to drive equity of opportunities for women and men to foster a Healthy Europe can become Corporate Supporters. Corporate Supporters may be charitable foundations, corporations operating in the health industry, small businesses and private individuals.

**Key Action Points— Corporate Supporters**

1. *Identify Corporate Supporters and secure agreements to become an EIWH Corporate Supporter.*
2. *Organise annual meeting of the Corporate Supporters with the EIWH Board of Directors, Expert Advisors and the Secretariat.*



**5. Maternal Health Report and Network**

Large variations exist with regard to maternal mortality, prevention strategies, issues and outcomes. This report will seek to better understand these disparities with the aim of assessing the central challenges in maternal health and the state of play in Europe to order to improve maternal health for all women. Improving maternal healthcare and eliminating preventable death of a woman from complications of pregnancy and childbirth requires identifying barriers that limit access to quality maternal health services and addressing them at all levels of the healthcare system.

A Maternal Health Network led by the EIWH and assisted by a group of experts will be set up to develop this policy area further. Key multidisciplinary experts will be members of the Council, including health and patient NGOs, scientific societies, health professional organisations. The Council remit will promote maternal health at EU and Member State level. The Network will reinforce its policy impact and ensure effective national uptake of promising and efficient initiatives at local level. The European Parliament Interest Group on Women’s Health, as well as EIWH national focal points will serve as platform to promote and support the advocacy work of the Council and share good practices.

**Key Action Points—Maternal Health**

1. *Secure funding for the Maternal Health Report.*
2. *Write the Maternal Health Report in consultation with a panel of expert reviewers*
3. *Identify and enlist members for the Maternal Health Network.*
4. *Develop Terms of Reference, background briefing and branding materials for the Maternal Health Network.*
5. *Host a meeting with the founding Members of the Maternal Health Network.*
6. *Build momentum for the report for the World Health Day 2021/2022.*
7. *Launch the Maternal Health Report and Network in European Parliament.*
8. *Distribute the report at local, national and European levels as well as through any already existing focal points.*



**6. Women and Alzheimer Advisory Council**

The EIWH will organise one face to face ‘Women and Alzheimer Advisory Council’ meeting in 2020-2021, dependent on available funding; an alternative will be to organise online meetings.

**Key Action Points—Alzheimer’s Disease**

1. *Updates by the Council on their Alzheimer’s disease work and Council meetings.*
2. *Identify common priorities and joint areas of work for the coming months.*
3. *Develop a comprehensive communication strategy with the Council to further promote the ‘Women and Alzheimer’ paper, to pool Council expertise and to empower the Council to speak with one voice.*
4. *Explore opportunities to further present the paper and its recommendations at national, EU and international conferences.*
5. *Collaborate with Members to generate a joint statement on older women’s health.*
6. *Raise awareness about Alzheimer’s Disease with the Women and Alzheimer paper in lead up to World Alzheimer’s Day on 21 September with EP Interest Group.*



**7. Midlife and Older Women’s Health and Neurological Disorders Reports**

Europe has the highest proportion of older women in the world. Women are on the forefront of ageing due to their greater longevity than men, their multiple carer and societal roles and their lower financial resources. The report will explore the central issues surrounding active and healthy ageing by employing the most recent evidence and literature. Concrete steps for action will be included in order to inform key stakeholders about the importance of older women’s health and need to take steps to promote active and healthy ageing.

Having presented a ‘Women and Alzheimer’ Position Paper in 2019, the EIWH has identified several neurological disorders that can further highlight the need to make neurodegenerative and brain diseases a comprehensive gender-based priority at EU and national level. Understanding the biological, psychosocial and cultural influences and gender differences in neurological disorders is crucial to better understanding the aetiology of such disorders and improve therapeutic strategies and outcomes. It is expected the report will look at among others, multiple sclerosis, migraine, epilepsy, restless leg syndrome, pain, stroke. Women and Neurological disorders, including Alzheimer’s disease will also be featured in the report.

**Key Action Points—Reports**

1. *Secure funding for the reports.*
2. *Create an expert review panel of leading domestic and international area on thematic priorities.*
3. *Draft the reports using the latest evidence base and policy.*
4. *Review the report in conjunction with the expert panel, Secretariat and EIWH membership.*
5. *Write a joint position paper with key stakeholders and EU leadership for the introduction.*
6. *Launch the report in European Parliament.*
7. *Distribute the report at national and European levels*
8. *Engage the Alzheimer’s Advisory Group and Interest Group for support and promotion of the report.*
9. *Promote the report and its findings through a social media campaign targeting awareness days and international events.*
10. *Develop a plan to contribute to policy advocacy on women and brain diseases.*



**8. Communications and Advocacy**

The EIWH works in partnership with stakeholders from many organisations within EU-funded projects and many other actions covering various policy and programming topics related to women and family health at national, regional and international level.

**Key Action Points—Advocacy**

1. *Represent at various international meetings, events and conferences through at events like Politico’s Annual Health Care Summit.*
2. *Mobilise social media communication streams to reach out to a wider audience targeting key awareness days like International Women’s Day, European Antibiotics Awareness Day, EU Immunization Week, European Week Against Cancer, World Health Day and Beijing+25.*
3. *Collaborate with other influential organisations and stakeholders to advocate on important societal health topics that affect women themselves but also in their role as carers of family health: men, children and older people.*
4. *Advocate, promote and cooperate with the European Commission and members of the European Parliament, as well as other EU agencies to improve all aspects of women’s health as set out in the EIWH Manifesto.*
5. *Ensure that applications for EU funding explicitly require sex and gender differences to be taken into account.*
6. *Advocate for the inclusion of sex, gender, age in biomedical research and clinical trials. Explore new ways to produce Real World Evidence regarding the potential benefits/risks other than clinical trials for population groups such as pregnant and lactating women. Currently there is societal lack of regulatory medicines information about the safety of medicines during pregnancy and lactation.*



**9. Publications and Consultations**

The EIWH will continue to encourage the integration of sex and gender into women’s health by continuing its successful evidence-based research and policy efforts. The EIWH regularly contributes and reviews publications and projects of other NGOs related to the Institute’s work in the field of women’s health. The EIWH publishes its work and findings.

Since 2012 the EIWH has generated policy briefs on a variety of diseases and health behaviours. Now we have an additional tool with our Manifesto for Women’s Health, which will enable the EIWH robustly to respond and contribute to European Commission, Parliament, Member States and European agencies such as EMA and ECDC consultations in order to help shape legislation and policies that affect women and their families.

The EIWH reach out to policymakers, health professionals, patient groups, health NGOs and civil society by to create a sense of urgency not only for a dialogue but also for action. The EIWH will continue its policy brief series in 2020/2021. The EIWH will develop additional evidence-based position papers during the 2020 period to support its work. Please see the EIWH policy brief <https://eurohealth.ie/policy-brief-women-and-asthma-in-the-eu-2017/>

The EIWH will explore role of digital health in reducing gender inequities by empowering patients—both women and men—to take control of their health and treatments. The EIWH will also explore environmental factors that impact the health of women across the lifespan from pre-pregnancy through older age as well as the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on women’s health.

**Key Action Points—Publications**

1. *Continue the policy brief series on topics including nutrition, obesity, pancreatic cancer, neurological diseases and mental health.*
2. *Generate position papers on environmental health and digital health.*
3. *Issue a special newsletter in follow-up to the Information Day.*
4. *Prepare a policy briefing on the impact of Covid 19 on gender and health.*
5. *Collaborate with other organisations and stakeholders on key women’s health topics to issue joint position statements.*
6. *Contribute to European Commission consultations on policies relevant to the health of women and their families and our EU Manifesto for Women’s Health.*
7. *Engage the media, including publishing articles, on key women’s health policy topics.*
8. *Continue issuing press releases for key dates throughout 2020/2021.*



**10. Preparations for 2021/2022\***

One major feature of the year 2021/2022 will be the EIWH European Conference on Women’s Health in celebration of 25 years of the Beijing Declaration in 2020 and the 25th anniversary of the EIWH in 2021. This conference should be the first of a bi-annual conference on women’s health at EU level.

Note: \* dates will be confirmed when the current covid-19 crisis has subsided.

**Major Activities for 2021/2022**

1. *Hosting and following up on the EU conference on Women’s Health*
2. *Celebration of 25years of the EIWH*
3. *Organisation of 3 meetings of the European Parliament Interest Group on Women’s Health*
4. *Initiation of European Parliament Own Initiative Report on Women’s Health*
5. *Continuation of the Women and Alzheimer Advisory Council*
6. *Maternal Health Network*
7. *Contribution to the EU Presidencies agenda*
8. *Addition of Focal Points in Member States*
9. *Continuation of Policy Brief Series*
10. *Targeted Communication and Advocacy*
11. *Evaluation and Monitoring of the Strategic Programme Implementation*



**Projects**

The EIWH works in consortia with diverse, multinational partners to achieve specific project objectives and contribute to better EU health policy. The EIWH is currently involved in four European projects.

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| NAME | FUNDER | NAME | WEBSITE | LOGO |
| MOPEAD | **Innovative Medicines Initiative** | Models of Patient Engagement for Alzheimer's disease | https://www.mopead.eu |  |
| MyHealth | **Health Programme** | Models to Engage Vulnerable Migrants and Refugees in their Health, through Community Empowerment and Learning Alliance | http://www.healthonthemove.net |  |
| GoNano | **Horizon 2020** | Governing nanotechnologies through societal engagement | http://gonano-project.eu |  |
| ConcePTION | **Innovative Medicines Initiative** | Continuum of Evidence from Pregnancy Exposures, Reproductive Toxicology and Breastfeeding to Improve Outcomes Now | https://www.imi-conception.eu |  |



**EIWH Advisory /Affiliation**

* European Medicines Agency (EMA): Member of Patient and Consumer Working party
* European Commission, DG SANTE: Member of HTA Stakeholder pool
* WHO: Expert Advisor to and Member of the Expert Group on gender mainstreaming and WHO Women’s Strategic Plan
* Co-Chair of the Department of Health (Ireland), Women’s Health Task Force
* Member of the Department of Health (Ireland), Independent Patient Safety Council
* DG SANTE: Member of the Joint Action -Vaccination Stakeholder platform
* European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC): Member Formal Advisory Group Representing-Patients (Observer)
* European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) Member of Technical Advisory Group on Vaccination Uptake
* European Public Health Alliance (EPHA): Board Member and former Presidency,
* European Patients Forum: Member of the Digital Advisory Group
* Member of European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) Patient/Industry Think Tank and joint Action on Vaccination
* WHO: Expert Advisor to and Member of the Expert Group on gender mainstreaming and WHO Women’s Strategic Plan
* Member of BBRMI Eric, a European research infrastructure for biobanking
* Fundamental Rights Agency: Member of the Stakeholder Platform

**Funding**

The European Institute of Women’s Health receives funding from a range of sources. The EIWH has a policy for commercial support and conflict of interest. The EIWH may accept unrestricted educational grants to support its activities. The policy strives to ensure that the funder relationships do not affect the educational and ethical standards of EIWH work. The EIWH openly acknowledges the various sources of the financial support received to carry out its activities (awareness and advocacy, communication, representation, etc.).

Due to its legal status as a registered charity in Ireland, the EIWH can only accept funding that does not pose a conflict of interest nor does it allow for funder influence over the content of its work, including dissemination. Funding is only accepted for activities in line with the EIWH’s objectives and work plan. The EIWH will try to achieve funding from multiple funders when possible. The decision on accepting or declining support lies with the secretariat and the Board of Directors.