

***THE PHARMACEUTICAL STRATEGY FOR EUROPE: A WELCOME SET OF ACTIONS BUT STRONG POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS NEEDED***

*“AIM welcomes the adoption of the Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe. It is timely and important to make sure that the pharmaceutical sector continues to contribute to advancing access to affordable and innovative medicine and in the end to the welfare in our societies. Not-for-profit healthcare payers are pleased to see that the European Commission recognises the need to improve access to affordable medicine for all patients and focusses on patients unmet needs.”*

*Loek Caubo, AIM President*

The European Commission has published today its Communication on a Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe. AIM, the leading international umbrella organisation of health mutuals and not-for-profit healthcare payers has read the Communication with interest, taking into account the strong international agenda for human rights development, and more importantly the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Affordability of and access to medicine is key**

For AIM and its members, affordability of pharmaceutical products, is the most important subject to be addressed by the European Pharmaceutical Strategy. AIM welcomes that access, covering unmet medical needs in antimicrobial resistance, rare or neurodegenerative diseases, and affordability are the first focus of the European Commission’s strategy. Prices of medicines must ensure sustainability of health budgets and need to reflect a measurable added therapeutic value.

**AIM calls for collaboration for fair prices**

The actions suggested in the Communication concur with the objectives of AIM’s [proposal to reach fair medicines prices in the EU](#). In this respect, AIM invites the European Commission and the World Health Organization to collaborate as much as possible in the frame of the Fair Pricing Forum including relevant stakeholders such as payer organisations.

**Investment in underserved disease areas is crucial**

We welcome the European Commission’s concerns with steering investment in currently underserved disease areas. The considerable public investment into COVID-19 reminds us that society is already contributing significantly to the development of pharmaceutical products. AIM believes that we do not need to have more, but better, qualitative incentives in disease areas that are of relevance to our societies. Governments should be playing their role, ask for better conditionalities and be more transparent on public contributions to research and development.

## An ecosystem of trust for real world data and Artificial Intelligence

Lastly, a number of actions aim at streamlining decision-making. AIM underlines that regulatory efficiency must not come at the cost of reduced certainty over products' safety, quality, efficacy and cost-effectiveness. As healthcare systems still look for the right way to integrate more data into decision-making, we emphasise that developments in evidence generation, such as those coming from real-world data, or artificial intelligence, must deliver meaningful information to decision-makers [in an ecosystem of trust](#) and appropriate skills for the healthcare workforce.

## Strong political will must be the engine of the European Commission's action

The ambitions of the European Commission in the Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe are high. They are conducive to making the pharmaceutical strategy a health strategy while putting patients at the center of the attention. It has the potential to really improve how pharmaceutical markets and health systems work today. The European Commission needs to ensure political will, expertise, clear-sight and resolve all along the way from diagnosis to action. Thorough, transparent discussions at European and at national level will allow to find and implement the appropriate responses for healthcare systems in Europe. AIM stands ready to cooperate and provide its members expertise for a fruitful discussions on affordability and cost-effectiveness of medicines.



The International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM) is an international umbrella organisation of federations of health mutuals and other not-for-profit healthcare payers. It has 57 members from 30 countries in Europe, Latin America and Africa and the Middle East. 33 of its members, from 20 countries, are based in the European Union. AIM members provide

compulsory and/or supplementary health coverage to around 240 million people around the world, including close to 200 million people in Europe, on a not-for-profit basis. Some AIM members also manage health and social services. Collectively, they have a turnover of almost €300 billion. AIM members are either mutual or health insurance fund.

They are: private or public legal entities; solidarity based; not-for-profit oriented organisations: surpluses are used to benefit the members; democratically-elected members play a role in the governance of the organisation.

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