



## CONNECTING INVESTMENT, EVIDENCE, AND IMPACT: HEALTHINTELACT'S CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK 2026

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The 2026 European Public Health Week (EUPHW) sets a clear direction for Europe's public health future with the overarching theme of *"investing for sustainable health and well-being"*. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Doctoral Network HealthIntelAct (2025–2028; hereafter HealthIntelAct) directly contributes to this ambition by training future public health experts in applying rigorous scientific methods to analyse comparable health care data, generating actionable performance intelligence to support evidence-informed health care governance and practice.

Across three pillars: "People", "Planet", and "Prosperity", 17 PhD fellows, supported by a multidisciplinary consortium composed of eight beneficiaries and over 30 associated partners, are developing and testing integrated approaches to strengthen health systems. Our work, and the vision of EUPHW 2026, align in a shared ambition: translating public health priorities into actionable, system level decisions. In this context, and in alignment with the EUPHW 2026 calendar, we showcase HealthIntelAct projects across our network to illustrate how this ambition is being put into practice.

### **Advancing equity and people-centred health systems (People)**

*"Equity-oriented investment requires moving beyond universal approaches alone and addressing structural barriers faced by vulnerable populations"* (EUPHW2026, 5<sup>th</sup> of May priority).

Aligning with this EUPHW priority, our "People" pillar aims to reduce systemic asymmetries, guided through inclusive development and people-centredness during evaluative processes of actionable performance intelligence. A key challenge is that inequalities are often measured in fragmented ways, limiting their use for decision-making. Growing

inequities undermine access to care, affect workforce sustainability and service delivery, while technological development might further amplify these health gaps.

Following these principles, this pillar works to place individuals at the heart of health systems, irrespective of their background, income, or location. Seven fellows within this pillar address health-related inequalities through multifaceted approaches, ranging from socioeconomic and geographic inequalities to healthcare discrimination, vaccination coverage and screening, equitable adoption of new technologies, and the use of patient-reported outcomes. By recognising the intersectionality of health inequalities and underlying structural barriers, this work aims to move beyond describing disparities towards informing concrete policy and practice decisions across micro, meso, and, macro levels.

### **Linking health and environmental action for sustainable health systems (Planet)**

*“Turning cross-sector policy into real health gains for all”* (EUPHW2026, 4<sup>th</sup> of May priority) is inseparable from environmental action and central to effective health promotion and community health. This includes not only reducing the environmental footprint of healthcare, but also strengthening climate resilience at individual, community, and system levels.

Investments in equity cannot be conceived in isolation from climate mitigation and ecosystem protection, where issues of climate justice and territorial equity often intersect. Better alignment of co-benefit policies can support health improvements while advancing sustainability objectives. Our “Planet” pillar addresses how environmental indicators can inform decision-making, rather than remaining descriptive, and understands how mitigation policies and incentives represent an opportunity for sustainable health governance and health promotion, fostering cross-sector collaboration guided by a common interest in robust health systems. Such efforts must remain cautious of the potential consequences of investments in practices or technologies that may ultimately harm the ecosystems that sustain both human and planetary health. This can be achieved by monitoring and mitigating the climate impact of healthcare services and the environmental footprint of hospitals. Inclusive and accessible initiatives, such as the EUPHW, provide opportunities to engage individuals and communities in adopting healthier and more environmentally sustainable behaviours. They also contribute to strengthening climate resilience by supporting adaptation to environmental challenges, and by encouraging policymakers to consider the environment not merely as a source of pressure on health systems, but as a fundamental determinant of health.

### **From efficiency analysis to resilient and sustainable systems (Prosperity)**

*“Behind every health system are the people who keep it running”* (EUPHW2026, 8<sup>th</sup> of May priority).

This EUPHW priority sits at the heart of our third pillar “Prosperity”. Health systems face growing pressures from rising costs, workforce shortages, and increasing demands for care. Smarter resource use, improved efficiency, and strategic planning can sustain affordable, high-quality care through better working conditions. Sustained health funding must balance accountability with responsiveness; thus “Prosperity” is anchored in the principle that health systems must be both financially and socially sustainable. Here, fellowships focus on reducing systemic inefficiencies, curbing low-value care, and strengthening financial sustainability so resources can be reinvested in improved working conditions and staffing retention such as GP turnover mitigation. In addition, Prosperity aims to advance workforce wellbeing by improving safety and wellness, supporting value-based workforce planning, and optimising integrated care to reduce system fragmentation. The goal is clear: to transform systems to ensure financial resilience and environmental sustainability while continuing to deliver equitable care that is supported by a healthier and more resilient workforce.

## **Conclusion**

The challenges that health systems face are complex and rapidly changing. The HealthIntelAct doctoral network aligns scientific expertise with the evolving needs of health systems. A central ambition is to strengthen the link between data, evidence, and decision-making. By remaining flexible and responsive, we will bridge scientific knowledge with real world experiences and develop actionable performance assessment that reflects on-field priorities. These challenges represent longstanding, and complex public health issues that demand an intersectional and multidisciplinary approach, achieved by leveraging collaborations across People, Planet, and Prosperity. Through our collective projects, our network is well positioned to advance and operationalise the aims outlined during EUPHW 2026.

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