

## **STATEMENT FROM THE EUROPEAN PATIENTS' FORUM**

### **The Patient's perspective on Patients' empowerment:**

- In recent years, the patients' role in healthcare has transformed from passive recipients of healthcare services to active and responsible actors in their own health management and healthcare-decision making.
- From our perspective, patient empowerment and their involvement in healthcare should never mean shifting responsibilities exclusively onto patients' shoulders, or developing a 'blame' culture whereby it is the fault of the patient that he acquires a disease because he has not lived a 'good life'. There is an individual responsibility for health, but it has to be placed in a context of social solidarity and to take into account social and health inequalities.
- Patients' trust in technical innovation plays a crucial role in making healthcare accessible and affordable for everyone. EPF tackles this trust issue through different EU-funded projects such as "Chain of Trust", "Renewing Health" and "Sustains".
- Meaningful patient involvement in EU health-related policy-making, programmes and projects is critical. We provide solution on how to get patients involved in health-related projects and policy thanks to the resources that outcome from our project Value+: the Value+ Toolkit for patients and patient organisations, the Value+ Handbook for project coordinators and leaders and a set of Policy Recommendations.
- Social and health inequalities which may lead to low health literacy are determined by many factors outside of the individual patients' control: geography, economic and social situation, family and social support, etc. EPF supports the principles of "equity and health in all policies" and integrate health inequalities in all of our policy work.

### **We call for:**

- The empowerment and involvement of patients, both as a core value and an essential element of sustainable health systems that contribute to our vision of high-quality, patient-centred equitable healthcare for all patients throughout the European Union.
- The promotion of health literacy as a key strategy to equip patients with the knowledge and skills needed to take an active role in managing their health and healthcare. Health literacy is a concept that involves the capacity to access and understand information, but also, the skills to use it, in order to make good health decisions.