

## **Pledge:**

### **Ensuring fair patient access to medicinal cannabis in Europe**

*This pledge is an initiative led by Medicinal Cannabis Europe, which aims to ensure fair patient access to medicinal cannabis in Europe.*

*Signatories commit to:*

- *Paving the way towards a clear definition and harmonised regulatory framework on medicinal cannabis;*
- *Supporting the allocation of funds in the field of medicinal cannabis under Horizon Europe;*
- *Fostering a social dialogue on the benefits of medicinal cannabis.*

### **ACCESS TO MEDICINAL CANNABIS**

Cannabis-derived medicines are recognised for their therapeutic effects. They are used in the treatment of a wide range of diseases, disorders, and symptoms (e.g. multiple sclerosis, seizures, HIV/AIDS, mental disorders). They are also instrumental in relieving patients from treatment-induced pain, e.g. in the case of cancers.

Yet, three hurdles still hamper access to medicinal cannabis and require urgent action:

- 1) The regulatory framework for production, marketing and authorisation is fragmented across the European Union (EU);
- 2) Funds for research and innovation are limited; and,
- 3) Social dialogue on the benefits of therapeutic cannabis is largely missing.

**As a result, European patients experience difficult access to high-quality cannabis-derived medicines.**

### **1. HARMONISED REGULATION**

The EU regulatory framework neither defines, nor regulates medicinal cannabis. Thus, policies vary greatly between countries. First, Member States do not all allow cannabis-based medicines on their market. Second, they display different rules for maximum levels of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and Cannabidiol (CBD) authorised in the medical products. That hampers the free trade of medicinal cannabis. Third, rules governing the production, licensing, distribution and reimbursement of medicinal cannabis also vary from one country to the next.

An EU legal definition of medicinal cannabis would allow to distinguish it from other applications. A clear legal framework would improve the quality of therapeutic cannabis, the accuracy of its labelling and the safety of patients.

## **2. RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

Research on medicinal cannabis has been largely underfunded at national level and absent at European level. This caused knowledge gaps regarding the benefits of medicinal cannabis in treating diseases or symptoms in order to enhance patients' comfort and daily life.

Funding opportunities, such as Horizon Europe, are instrumental for increasing our understanding of the impact of THC, CBD and other cannabinoids on medical treatments, as well as on the human body.

## **3. SOCIAL DIALOGUE**

The scarcity of scientific evidence, the chronic underfunding of research and the prejudicial confusion between medical and other applications impaired the social dialogue.

An open dialogue between policy-makers, scientists, doctors, pharmacists and patients is crucial to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the latest scientific developments and outcomes, as a way to dismantle societal misperception and deep-rooted negative beliefs about medicinal cannabis.

## **OUR PLEDGE**

By signing this document, we pledge that we will:

- 1) Strive towards a harmonised European regulatory framework for medicinal cannabis by:
  - Contributing to shaping a common definition of medicinal cannabis;
  - Paving the way for harmonised rules for the licencing, production, distribution and access to medicinal cannabis.
- 2) Secure research and innovation opportunities in the field of medicinal cannabis by:
  - Allocating specific budgets under Horizon Europe;
  - Supporting initiatives towards such funding resources at Member State level.
- 3) Foster social dialogue on medicinal cannabis by:
  - Nurturing and sustaining constructive, inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogue throughout the harmonisation process.

We commit in trying to achieve the above pledge by the end of the next European legislative term in 2024.