

# MANIFESTO

European Parliament 2019-2024



<https://cam-europe.eu>

## COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE for sustainable patient-centred healthcare

**EUROCAM** is the European foundation that represents the views and interests of various European umbrella organisations that are made up of either patients or Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) practitioners. This includes doctors, veterinarians and practitioners who practise various disciplines of CAM in Europe.

**EUROCAM** covers a broad spectrum of CAM modalities, including acupuncture, Ayurveda, anthroposophic medicine, herbal medicine, homeopathic medicine, naturopathic or traditional European medicine, osteopathy and traditional Chinese medicine.

The practice of CAM modalities affiliated to EUROCAM is based on clinical expertise, which has been collected in the course of their existence, and the best available clinical evidence from scientific research built over the last few decades.

Through the umbrella organisations, EUROCAM represents 60,000 organised patients/citizens, 250 national CAM associations and a substantial part of the 400,000 physicians, veterinarians and practitioners in this sector across Europe.

### Current challenges to healthcare in Europe

EU health systems are facing a number of challenges, like ageing populations, antimicrobial resistance, non-communicable diseases and soaring healthcare costs.<sup>1</sup>

CAM can make a substantial contribution to address these health policy issues as CAM treatments are more adapted to the individual needs of patients and complement conventional medicine to improve treatment outcomes.

Moreover, CAM modalities can often be used as a first option in treating many conditions, reducing the use of usually costly conventional drugs, which nevertheless would remain for use if required.

CAM modalities can help to prevent the long-term dependency on conventional medication and to reduce the enormous burden of mortality and morbidity caused by the adverse effects of conventional drugs.

**Therefore, EUROCAM calls on the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council, in the 2019-2024 legislature, to include CAM in their policies to tackle the following issues:**

<sup>1</sup>Companion 2017 report on the State of Health in the EU, European Commission, available from [https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/state/docs/2017\\_companion\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/state/docs/2017_companion_en.pdf)



Patients have access to more information and are taking an active role in the choice of their healthcare provisions. Their rights as consumers have increased in European legislation over the years. The freedom of choice regarding the best healthcare in individual cases contribute to the trust and satisfaction of the users in the healthcare system. This is in line with the European Charter of Patients' Rights, which lists fourteen patients' rights, including the right of access to the health services that answer the individual patient's health needs, the right to information, the right to personalised treatment and the right to choose freely from among different treatment procedures and providers.<sup>10</sup>

Currently, one in two EU citizens uses CAM in one form or another as part of their healthcare, whether as a complement to, or an alternative to conventional care.<sup>11</sup> According to the report by the EU Commission financed CAMbrella project (2010-2012) which assessed the situation of CAM in Europe, people use CAM because they are dissatisfied with orthodox medicine and favour more natural and gentle methods of healing, preferably within existing healthcare systems.<sup>12</sup> Yet, the high demand is not reflected in EU or national health policy or provision. In addition, there is a huge diversity in its regulation across the EU determining who can practise CAM, what qualifications are required and how services are offered and financed. This patchy provision means that citizens experience practical and attitudinal barriers that limit their access to and use of CAM. To redress these inequalities, a pan-European process should be initiated to establish an appropriate regulation of providers of CAM throughout the EU with appropriate guarantees.

## Citizens' freedom of choice in healthcare

### EUROCAM calls on the EU political leaders to

support the right of patients to choose the treatment they want to receive and trust, by promoting:

- Implementation of Union legislation in cross-border healthcare regarding CAM;
- Increased integration of CAM into healthcare system;
- Improved EU regulation of CAM products, practices and providers;
- Greater investment in researching CAM's benefits and risks.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.activecitizenship.net/patients-rights/materials.html>

<sup>11</sup> [http://cordis.europa.eu/news/rcn/35388\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/news/rcn/35388_en.html)

<sup>12</sup> Nissen N et al. Citizens' needs and attitudes towards CAM, CAMbrella WP3 report, 2012