The individual desire for health and wellbeing is something we all share. With this in mind, one of the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to encourage people across the globe to live lives that are as healthy as possible at every stage of their existence. We committed ourselves to this goal last year within the framework of the United Nations. Now we have to implement this ambitious objective. That involves fighting epidemics and poverty related diseases and also extends to improving prevention and treatment of complaints of modern civilisation such as diabetes and cardiovascular disorders.

Germany plays a very active role in global health policy. To bring about further progress, we must strengthen healthcare systems worldwide and reform the global healthcare structure. We sharpened the focus on both these issues during Germany’s G7 Presidency. We intend to build on this when our country assumes the G20 Presidency at the end of this year.

Whether we are talking about institutional factors or other global health issues such as a joint approach to tackling antimicrobial resistance, we can only be effective in overcoming the challenges they present if scientists, policymakers and society work together side by side. This is why dialogue forums such as the World Health Summit are particularly important. As the patron of the Summit, I would like to welcome all participants to Berlin. This message comes with my hope that you will enjoy a fruitful exchange of new insights. I would like to thank you most sincerely for your remarkable commitment to advancing healthcare throughout the world.

Angela Merkel
Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany


Angela Merkel
Bundeskanzlerin der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
The themes discussed during this eighth World Health Summit are both ambitious and strategic. They also reflect the deep changes we are seeing in the world. The terms of globality and universality are now, more than ever, associated with health: quality care for all, accessible to all; international preventive measures; renewed support for health as a driver of development, growth and stability; and an ambitious research policy, which is a source of progress. These are principles to which France is committed, and which it supports in international bodies. France thus obtained, during the last G7, that reflection will take place at international level on access to expensive medicines. This Summit is a forum for discussion and dialogue, bringing together men and women “of good will”. That means it is a place of peace.

I wish you all excellent meetings.

François Hollande
President of the French Republic
It is impossible to talk about health issues in the past year in Europe without reflecting on the refugee crisis, and the challenges and opportunities that it has presented for Europe. Over one million children, women and men arrived at our shores and borders last year.

The European Union had a common responsibility to ensure that these persons, many of them physically and mentally exhausted, were offered care and support, including through the provision of healthcare when required. Their journeys were punishing, and we cannot imagine the impossible choice they had to make between staying in their countries in extreme danger and the unenviable alternative of risking their lives at the hands of people smugglers. Europe’s number one task was to offer these people a humane reception in Europe, which the Commission helped to achieve by the setting up of hotspots in Greece and Italy, and through financial and practical assistance to our Member States under our emergency asylum funding and through the EU’s Civil Protection Mechanism.

Our next priority is to ensure the effective integration of those that are granted international protection. For some that will mean receiving access to our health services. At the same time, the people who arrive in Europe must be given the opportunity to pay their way, through access to the labour market. And there is an obvious counterbalance to the demands they make of our healthcare system with the contributions that they can make to it. I hear of many medical professionals coming to Europe seeking to rebuild their lives; doctors and nurses, pharmacists and researchers, carers and therapists. In the next year I hope to hear heart-warming stories of their integration into our national health services, care homes, research institutes and universities and the valuable contribution they are making.

And one reason to welcome these new arrivals is the reason I gave you in my message for last year’s World Health Summit – Europe’s population is getting older, which makes it increasingly difficult to provide for our healthcare needs. I know that you will again address the healthcare challenges of an aging population at this year’s Summit. Setting strategic research priorities will be of fundamental importance, and I am pleased that the European Commission continues to make an important contribution through our Horizon 2020 funding program.

Another area where we are making an important contribution is eHealth. More and more people are taking steps to monitor their own health and lifestyles
through wearable devices and smartphones. These form an excellent contribution to prevent and monitor diseases. Through the Connecting Europe Facility, we are contributing to building Europe’s digital health infrastructure. So far, 20 of our Member States have applied for funding to connect their systems and exchange health data and patient information or to offer e-prescriptions and reduce the administrative burden on our care systems.

Let me conclude by mentioning the healthcare industry, which is one of the major drivers of jobs, growth and innovation in Europe. We need a successful economy to sustain our European social model, and you are an intrinsic part of this with the many thousands of jobs you create and sustain. The world is getting older, and the world is in need of health technology to sustain us as we go through a major demographic change. Europe must lead the way in looking after its own citizens, and it must generate a competitive advantage in the global market for healthcare services and products.

I wish you a fruitful Summit, and another year of success.

Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission