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Health Union Fellowship – Call for Nominations for the Cohort 3

Health Union Fellowship

Health unites us.

Information pack for countries participating in HUF

OCTOBER 2026

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Health Union Fellowship

Empowering public health policy experts to effectively navigate EU health policies

Capability-building program of the European Commission for health policy professionals working within Ministries of Health or other national health bodies across Europe

Fellowship Characteristics

- **34 Fellows**
- **5 live workshops**
- **Content sessions, applied learning and networking**
- **Individual and joint reflection**
- **Ongoing mentoring**
- **Annual Forum & Alumni network**

Selected Key Themes

- EU health policymaking, governance and European cooperation in health
- Implementation of the European Health Union: Instruments and Frameworks
- One Health
- Health security
- Health promotion and disease prevention
- Health system resilience and sustainability
- Digital health transformation, European Health Data Space and AI in health
- Knowledge brokering and stakeholder engagement
- Health Technology Assessment
- Biotechnology, Medicines and Medical Devices
- Global Health

Why the Health Union Fellowship matters for Europe's future?

- COVID-19 demonstrated the **need for unified efforts across Europe** in addressing the biggest health challenges of our time[1,2] – e.g., medicines/medical devices supply, digital cross-country collaboration
- The European Health Union is instrumental in **better preventing and responding to health threats** among our citizens, **strengthening health system resilience**[3] (incl. crisis preparedness, a sufficient workforce, and secure supply of medicines and medical devices), as well as **supporting innovation and competitiveness** in health
- The Fellowship will bring our Health Union even more to life by providing a **platform for mutual learning, best practice and knowledge sharing**, as well as ongoing and informal exchange between Member States and EU4Health Associated Countries
- The Fellowship **complements existing programmes** by offering practice-oriented training and strengthening a thriving community of health experts from Member States and EU4Health Associated Countries

1. The Lancet (2024); 2. European Council on Foreign Relations (2020); 3. European Commission (2024)



"The mission of our Health Union spans beyond health emergencies. We constantly face common health challenges that require joint European solutions."

Ursula von der Leyen, April 2024

Objective of the HUF | We aim to strengthen the Health Union for a healthier future

Further enable … national experts in navigating the EU health policy landscape and in exchanging success stories, best practices, and challenges with an EU-wide community

Proactively contribute to … EU health policies by leveraging national experts' in-depth knowledge and insights into EU policy governance, processes, and priority topics

Informally engage … with an EU-wide network to discuss health (system) challenges and explore potential solutions, while setting the foundation for even stronger collaboration

Reliably sustain … connections over a one-year programme with a new cohort starting every year embedded in a growing alumni network

Fellowship structure | The different elements of the Fellowship will foster mutual learning and knowledge sharing within our community

In-person workshops

Provide knowledge and enable community building for fellows

- Multiple training sessions on key EU health policy areas
- Fellow-led sessions and panel discussions and diverse opportunities for peer exchange

Real-life case studies

Provide opportunities to jointly tackle EU health challenges

- Understand EU health priorities through real-world examples
- Embedding theory in practice
- Foster fellow exchange through practical application

Annual Forum

Celebrate the third cohort in a closing event

- Reflection on the fellowship and welcome to the alumni network
- Opportunity for networking and health policy discussions

Community building and networking

Offer opportunity to build a trusted community with a shared language

- Focused on community building, incl. stakeholder networking
- Continued growth beyond each cohort in the alumni network

Ongoing mentoring

Support fellows through dedicated mentors and training team

- One mentor for each fellow to support learning experience
- Support structure provided to both fellows and mentors

Individual and joint reflection

Enable fellows to reflect on their learning experience

- Reflection on lessons learned in short report and joint discussion
- Feedback from cohort feeds into concept for subsequent years

Stakeholders | Fellows are at the core of the Health Union Fellowship, embedded in a network of multiple supporting actors



Fellows from Member States and EU4Health Associated Countries

- Form the core of the Fellowship as Cohort 3

Mentors from Member States and EU4Health Associated Countries

- Support the Fellows in their learning experience

Advisory Board (nominated senior stakeholders)

- Provide strategic guidance and evaluate Fellowship outcomes

Alumni network

- Former fellows who contribute as speakers and mentors, and shape initiatives to sustain HUF community engagement beyond the programme

Fellowship training team

- DG SANTE/HaDEA as orchestrator with support from group led by Boston Consulting Group (BCG)

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Concept Cohort 3

1 Building Foundations

- **In-person workshops:** Structured learning on EU health policy and priorities with five face-to-face training sessions and self-paced digital learning
- **Ongoing mentoring:** One mentor for each fellow to support learning experience, supported by training team

Fellows acquire **knowledge, skills,** and personal guidance

2 Applying & Connecting

- **Real-life case studies**: Tackle current EU health challenges together while strengthening knowledge and practical skills
- **Community building:** Creating a trusted network with embedded community building activities and alumni network

Fellows move **from theory to practice,** forming lasting bonds

3 Sharing & Reflecting

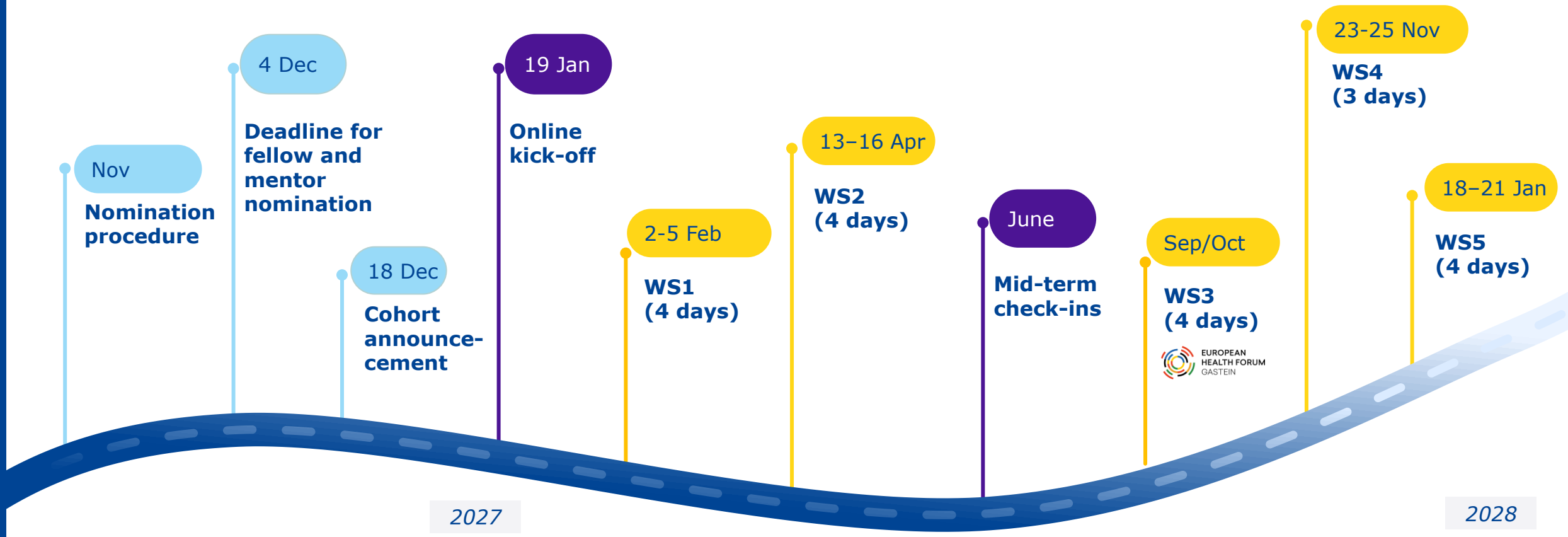
- **Annual Forum (Brussels) & Health Policy Conference:** Opportunity for visibility and networking with key stakeholders and other EU health communities
- **Individual & joint reflection**: Reports, discussions, feedback loops

Fellows **contribute insights** back to the EU health community

Fellows create lasting EU health impact

Tentative timeline of workshops and meetings

Timeline | The third cohort will start in January 2027



In-person workshop learning is supported by foundational self-paced digital learning in a reverse classroom approach

Key admin dates | Digital events | In-person events

WS3: Participation in EHFG still subject to confirmation

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Call to action | Country nominations by 4 December enable the launch of Cohort 3

- **Please, nominate up to three fellow candidates and one mentor in line with this guidance by 4 December 2026** (see details on the following pages)
- **Based on your inputs, DG SANTE will validate the nominations in December and will communicate the selection outcome by 18 December 2026**
- **For the selected fellows and mentors the onboarding will take place as a virtual kick-off meeting in 19 January 2027**

Recommended fellow profile | Fellows bring national experience and EU policy exposure

Ideal Fellow Profile

- Mid-career MoH/agency professional engaged in EU health policymaking
- Experience in the national health sector
- Exposure to EU health policymaking
- Current focus on an EU priority topic
- Demonstrated leadership responsibility
- English proficiency (min. C1)

Tasks

- **Participate in all in-person workshops** and follow digital learning materials
- Join a **virtual mid-term check-in with the training team**
- Complete **mid-term and final fellowship reports**
- **Actively participate through case studies**, group exercises and fellow-led sessions on EU policymaking
- Connect and **exchange knowledge** with peers
- Continue contributing via the **alumni network**

Expected time investment

- **20 training days** + travel (4/3 days of training per WS + self-paced online material + travel time)

Mandatory Encouraged

Benefits

- Build a strategic network across EU institutions
- Gain deep EU health policy expertise
- Accelerate career in public health leadership
- Join alumni network for continued collaboration

Recommended mentor profile | Mentors help fellows navigate between national systems and EU policy

Ideal Mentor Profile

- Senior[1] official at MoH/agency or HUF alumnus/alumna
- No direct departmental relationship with the nominated fellows
- Multi-year national leadership record
- Proven EU policy engagement
- Prior coaching / mentoring experience
- English proficiency (min. C1)

Tasks[2]

- ✓ Conduct **regular virtual 1:1 touchpoints[3]** and **one mid-term check-in** with fellows to provide guidance
- ✓ Join the **two mentor forums** to share feedback and refine mentoring approaches (1.5-2 hour duration)
- ✓ Support the fellow in building a professional EU health network by facilitating contact with key experts and offering advice on networking
- ☆ Participate in a pool of topic experts accessible for fellows to request ad hoc, topic-specific support on a voluntary basis
- ☆ Contribute to **training modules and the Annual Forum** on a voluntary basis

✓ Encouraged ☆ Optional

1. Ideally more senior than nominated fellows
2. Mentors must formally commit to the defined mandatory tasks
3. At least three: at the beginning, mid-way and the end of the programme

Note: DG SANTE will aid in sourcing mentors only for countries joining HUF for the first time e.g., Iceland, the Netherlands, Latvia, Serbia

Benefits

- Mentor and advise future EU health leaders
- Share policy expertise on real-world challenges
- Reconnect with peers via mentor forums

"Mentorship has been a valuable two-way exchange. We have reflected on how EU policy making works in practice and what a stronger EHU could mean for people, health systems and MS."

Mentor value proposition | Mentoring is a shared investment with returns for fellows, mentors and Member States alike

For Mentors:
Personal and professional value of participation

- **Purpose and legacy:** shape the next generation of EU health leaders through trusted policy and career guidance
- **Knowledge and insight:** stay close to emerging EU health topics through HUF content and structured exchange with fellows
- **Expanded network:** connect with fellows and senior peers through mentor forums and events, expanding networks across the EU health policy landscape
- **Flexible, supported commitment:** engage through defined touchpoints and training sessions with support ranging from mentor forums to monthly office hours

For Member States:
Strategic value of nominating senior mentors

- **Stronger EU connectivity:** deepen links to emerging EU health priorities and peer Member States through senior mentor participation
- **Two-way knowledge transfer:** bring cross-border insights from fellows, the mentor community and HUF content back into national administrations
- **Low-cost capacity building:** expand engagement across the European Health Union network through a flexible, light-touch commitment
- **Senior talent development:** strengthen coaching and leadership capabilities of experienced officials while supporting succession planning

Next steps| Please nominate up to three Fellows and one mentor by 4 December (EOB)

Please provide us with (by 4 Dec EOB):

1 Fellow nomination

- A ranked list of up to three fellows in line with the selection criteria
- One completed CV for each nominated fellow

2 Mentor nomination

- Nomination of one mentor in line with the target profile provided
- Completed CV for the nominated mentor

Please note that DG SANTE will not be providing mentors for countries unable to nominate one.

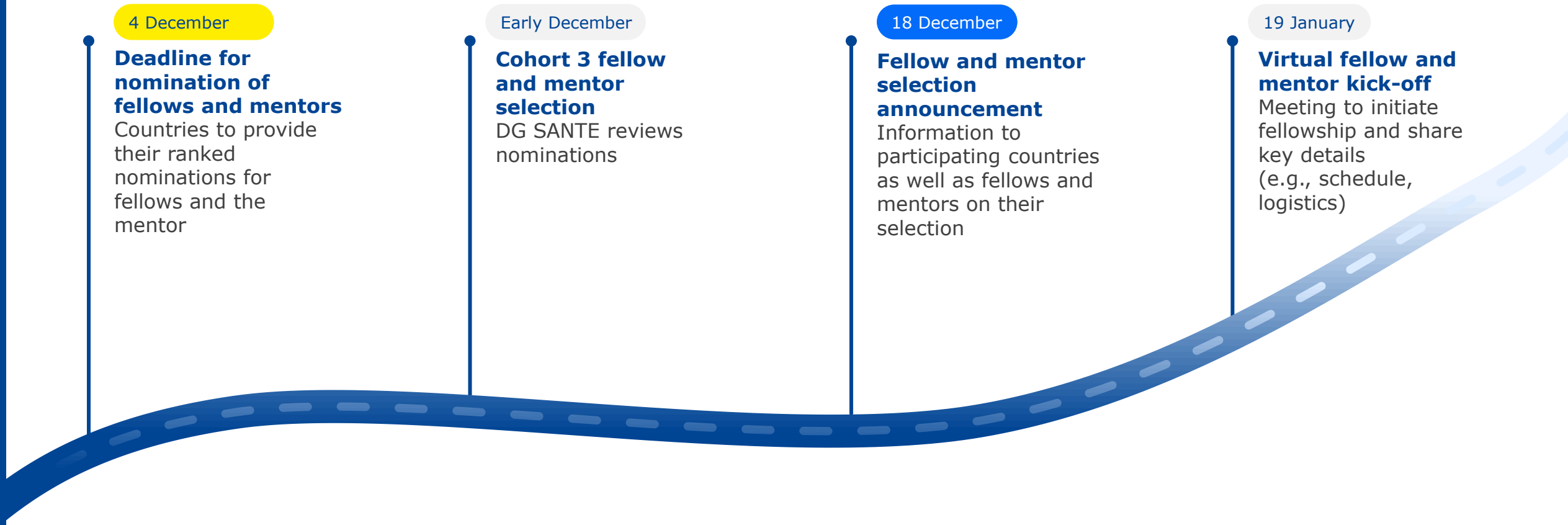
EOB = end of business
There are 34 fellowship places. If any remain unfilled in the first round of nominations, a **second round will open to countries that submitted more than one nominee**

How to submit the nomination

Process can be led by Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

- Please share your country's nomination via email to both:
  health-union-fellowship@ec.europa.eu
  EU-Health-Policy-Network@bcg.com
- Please list your ranked fellows and the mentor in the email and attach their CVs (both for fellows & mentor)
- For the CV, if possible, use the provided template and ensure full completion

Next steps | In the coming weeks, we kindly request your support in nominating fellows and mentors as we prepare the HUF programme



4 December

Deadline for nomination of fellows and mentors
Countries to provide their ranked nominations for fellows and the mentor

Early December

Cohort 3 fellow and mentor selection
DG SANTE reviews nominations

18 December

Fellow and mentor selection announcement
Information to participating countries as well as fellows and mentors on their selection

19 January

Virtual fellow and mentor kick-off
Meeting to initiate fellowship and share key details (e.g., schedule, logistics)

XX Information point for countries participating in HUF

XX Instances where HUF countries' support is required

XX Other key activities

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Contact details of the training team

If you have any questions, please reach out to:

DG SANTE team – Health-Union-Fellowship@ec.europa.eu

BCG team – EU-Health-Policy-Network@bcg.com

HUF training team | Supporting fellows throughout the HUF journey

Health Union Fellowship team bringing together capabilities from various institutions

DG SANTE


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