

**Question for written answer E-003369/2025/rev.1
to the Commission**
Rule 144
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Subject: The decline in the number of pharmacies in Europe

The Commission is hoovering up more and more powers in the area of health. At the same time, the EU's healthcare system is on the brink of collapse, as there is expected to be a shortage of 4.1 million doctors, nurses and midwives by 2030. The already tense situation is being exacerbated by the decline in the number of pharmacies across Europe – Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Poland are particularly affected.

The acute shortage of qualified personnel, price regulations, overregulation and bureaucracy have all contributed to this state of affairs. Above all, however, the rise of online retail and fierce competition from large pharmacy chains are making it difficult for independent pharmacies to survive.

The consequences are serious: limited supply of medicines, a drop in individual consultations and advice and job losses. The situation is particularly critical in rural areas: low turnover combined with high operating costs mean that fewer and fewer pharmacies are able to survive in such areas. This makes healthcare provision in rural areas of the EU particularly precarious.

1. What is the Commission doing to counter the decline in the number of pharmacies in Europe?
2. How does the Commission intend to regulate the excessive, uncontrolled and often dangerous online trade in medicines?
3. What measures is the Commission taking to combat the general inadequate provision of services to, and neglect of, rural areas in the EU?

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