Question for written answer E-002822/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: European funds allocated to fighting period poverty

The 2026-2030 gender equality strategy, adopted by the Commission on 5 March 2026, acknowledges for the first time that menstrual and menopause poverty affect many women across the EU. In the strategy, the Commission referenced the 2022 revision of the VAT Directive, which enabled Member States to apply a reduced or zero rate to menstrual products, and proposed organising an exchange of best practices between EU Member States regarding measures to combat menstrual and menopause poverty at national level.

However, VAT reduction alone does not guarantee the accessibility of menstrual products. According to estimates, in 2024 and 2025, 42 % of European women experienced period poverty at least once[1]. This figure highlights the limitations of current measures and raises questions about what further steps could be taken at EU and national level to address the issue more effectively.

1. In addition to the exchange of best practices, what EU budget mechanisms does the Commission intend to mobilise to support Member States in facilitating access to menstrual products, including, for example, the European Social Fund Plus, which already supports measures targeting poverty and social exclusion?

2. Will the Commission issue guidance to the Member States on the eligibility of such measures under current funding programmes?

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[1] European Survey entitled ‘Règles Élémentaires’, OpinionWay Healthcare, 2025.