

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002377/24
to the Commission
Seán Kelly (PPE)
(31 October 2024)**

Subject: Equality of healthcare for women

Women's health issues are often seen as being limited to sexual and reproductive health. However, there are female-specific differences present in all medical disciplines and all aspects of diagnosis. Women regularly experience delays in diagnosis for the most common and deadly conditions, are more likely to be misdiagnosed and have a greater likelihood of receiving a psychiatric diagnosis for physical symptoms.

According to the European Institute of Women's Health, health inequalities result in a loss of EUR 980 billion per year for the EU ⁽¹⁾.

1. What is the Commission's approach to tackling women's inequality in healthcare?
2. Is the Commission considering the creation of a specific women's healthcare strategy for Europe to support the Member States in adopting relevant initiatives?

Submitted: 31.10.2024

**Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(16 January 2025)**

The promotion of gender equality has been a long-standing theme in the activities of the EU, in line with the principles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU ⁽¹⁾ and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ⁽²⁾.

Biological and social influences affect women's and men's health in different ways (e.g. different rates of disease, symptoms and responses to treatment for the same disease).

The Commission is mainstreaming gender into its health policy and supporting relating activities under the EU4Health programme. For example, the Gender Equality Strategy ⁽³⁾ highlights the need to address gender-specific health risks. The European Cancer Inequalities Registry ⁽⁴⁾ shows inequalities by sex.

The Council Recommendation on cancer screening ⁽⁵⁾ states that due account should be taken of specific needs of men and women, while the Council Recommendation on vaccine-preventable cancers ⁽⁶⁾ recommends that the Member States strengthen national efforts to increase the uptake of vaccination against Human papilloma virus for girls and for boys.

The communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health ⁽⁷⁾ aims to help address gender-related issues linked to inequalities, gender-based violence and discrimination.

Furthermore, exchanges of good practices among Member States encourage the establishment of models taking the specific needs of women and men in chronic diseases into account, as done for cardiovascular diseases in the GenCAD project ⁽⁸⁾.

¹ <https://www.cpme.eu/api/documents/adopted/2023/06/EIWH-Manifesto-for-Women's-Health.pdf>.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12016ME%2FTXT>

⁽²⁾ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

⁽⁴⁾ <https://cancer-inequalities.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

⁽⁵⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32022H1213%2801%29>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/21/council-adopts-recommendation-to-help-combat-vaccine-preventable-cancers/>

⁽⁷⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/comprehensive-approach-mental-health_en

⁽⁸⁾ Gender Differences in Coronary Artery Disease (GenCAD): https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/705d956d-4024-4dc4-8aa7-b5284217cca0_en?filename=2019_gencad_frep_en.pdf