

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003086/24
to the Commission
Ioan-Rareş Bogdan (PPE)
(27 December 2024)**

Subject: Implementation of a ‘European Health Guarantee’

Given the continuing public health challenges facing the EU Member States, the unequal access to quality health services highlights the urgent need for coordinated action at EU level.

The introduction of a ‘European Health Guarantee’ that ensures fair access to health services, including prevention, treatment and essential medicines, can make a significant contribution to reducing disparities and making health systems more resilient.

This ‘Guarantee’ could help achieve the objective of a more cohesive and mutually-supportive European Union by reducing inequalities between European regions in the field of health.

1. With this in mind, can the Commission state whether it intends to bring forward a specific initiative for the implementation of a ‘European Health Guarantee’, similar to other European guarantees (e.g. The ‘Youth Guarantee’)?
2. What measures are planned to support Member States in strengthening their health systems so as to ensure equal and universal access to high-quality health services?
3. How does the Commission intend to work with Member States to define minimum standards on the accessibility and quality of health services at EU level?

Submitted: 27.12.2024

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(10 March 2025)**

Although most EU Member States have achieved universal coverage for a core set of health services, the range of services covered and the degree of cost-sharing vary, potentially raising affordability issues for some population groups.

According to Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ⁽¹⁾, Member States are responsible for the organisation and delivery of their health services and medical care. Principle 16 of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan ⁽²⁾ underscores the right to affordable healthcare of good quality.

The Commission supports Member States in upholding this principle through funding projects, which provide support to improve affordability of healthcare ⁽³⁾, ensure fairer distribution of health benefits ⁽⁴⁾, and address barriers in access to healthcare for persons with disabilities ⁽⁵⁾.

Given the share of competences and differences in health systems across the EU, the Commission does not intend to propose a ‘European Health Guarantee’ and minimum standards in access to healthcare.

The Commission works through the European Semester to provide country-specific policy advice and promote health systems reforms improving access to healthcare.

The Recovery and Resilience Facility and Cohesion Policy Funds provide investments to address gaps in access to healthcare according to national challenges.

The EU legislation, such as Directive 2019/882 contains accessibility requirements that are relevant for health services for persons with disabilities.

⁽¹⁾ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=en>

⁽²⁾ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/european-pillar-social-rights-building-fairer-and-more-inclusive-european-union/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en

⁽³⁾ HS-g-14.1.1 Supporting Member States in improving access to healthcare and effectiveness of health coverage, taking into account vulnerabilities of specific groups and targeted intervention; https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/024cb1cb-44ab-44be-a21e-56757550eb05_en?filename=com_2022-5436_annex1_en.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ HS-p-23-46 The role of healthcare in reducing poverty; https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ff17bd26-4cdd-4351-a4e3-e2ca85aa3e84_en?filename=wp2023_annex_en.pdf

⁽⁵⁾ HS-p-22-14.02 Guidelines on access to healthcare for people with disabilities; https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/331c4ac5-492d-4359-a708-c0a7e2cfa363_en?filename=c_2023_5052_1_annex_en.pdf

In the 2021-2027 programming period, investments of EUR 7.6 billion, under European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) ⁽⁶⁾ and Interreg provide support among other to health infrastructure and services.

⁽⁶⁾ ERDF support is primarily programmed under Policy Objective 1(PO1), *A More Competitive and Smarter Europe*, and Policy Objective 4 (PO4), *A More Social Europe*.