

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000713/25
to the Commission
Giorgos Georgiou (The Left)
(17 February 2025)

Subject: Establishing high-quality radiotherapy departments and modern oncology centres at public hospitals

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan (COM(2021) 44) and the European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2022 on strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer (paragraph 105) stress the importance of establishing high-quality radiotherapy departments and modern oncology centres at public hospitals, based on European guidelines and in line with the latest scientific evidence.

However, many patients in the EU sadly continue to face numerous difficulties as many oncology departments at public hospitals suffer from staff shortages and a lack of capacity. Cyprus is the only EU Member State without an integrated public oncology centre with a radiotherapy department, meaning that cancer patients have no other choice but to turn to the private sector.

In view of the above:

1. Will the Commission assess and provide published updates on the progress that each Member State makes in achieving the targets of the European strategy for quality public healthcare services?
2. What steps will it take to support Member States in achieving the targets they have not yet met, thereby ensuring a common European public health standard for cancer prevention and treatment in all EU Member States?

Submitted: 17.2.2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(2 May 2025)

EU policies support Member States to strengthen their health systems, via knowledge sharing, technical assistance, funding and policy recommendations.

Each year the analysis in the European Semester ⁽¹⁾ points to needs for reforms and investments in the health systems of Member States and several Member States receive Country-Specific Recommendations to strengthen their health systems. The Commission also provides Member States with significant funding to this end.

More than EUR 42 billion from the Recovery and Resilience Facility ⁽²⁾ and EUR 14 billion from the Cohesion Policy funds are earmarked for investments in the Member States' health systems including for hospital infrastructure, primary care, integrated health services, disease prevention, digital health and health workforce skills.

Furthermore, the EU4Health Programme ⁽³⁾ also aims to address the long-term health challenges in the EU by building stronger, more resilient and more accessible health systems. As of April 2024, EUR 531.5 million have been allocated to cancer, including for the implementation of the Cancer Plan.

The State of Health in the EU initiative ⁽⁴⁾ also provides country health profiles, comparative data, and policy recommendations to monitor and enhance healthcare quality and accessibility. This aligns with efforts to achieve targets within a European strategy for quality public healthcare services.

Similarly, the European Cancer Inequalities Registry ⁽⁵⁾, a flagship initiative of the Cancer Plan, supports Member States by highlighting inequalities and challenges in cancer prevention, treatment, and care between and within countries.

This helps Member States identify gaps and areas for action to better guide investments at national and regional level.

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/european-semester_en

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

⁽³⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union_en

⁽⁴⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/state-health-eu/overview_en

⁽⁵⁾ <https://cancer-inequalities.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>