

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001595/25
to the Commission
Tomislav Sokol (PPE)
(22 April 2025)**

Subject: Addressing healthcare workforce shortages through innovation

Europe faces a critical shortage of healthcare professionals, with over 1.2 million doctors, nurses and midwives needed as of 2022. Without action, this gap could reach 4 million by 2030. Ageing populations, chronic diseases and COVID-19 have worsened the crisis, with a 62% rise in health worker absences during the pandemic. Innovations such as telemedicine, AI-driven diagnostics and digital health platforms can help alleviate strain, improve efficiency and enhance patient care.

1. Does the Commission recognise the role of healthcare innovations in addressing healthcare workforce shortages?
2. What specific measures is the Commission implementing to promote the adoption of such health innovations across the Member States to alleviate the burden on healthcare workers and enhance patient safety?

Submitted: 22.4.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(1 July 2025)**

The Commission acknowledges that health workforce shortages are a challenge in the EU ⁽¹⁾. Under Article 168(7) of the Treaty ⁽²⁾, Member States are responsible for the organisation of their health workforce. Healthcare innovations can help address workforce shortages, but a skilled and involved workforce is essential for their impact.

Several initiatives strengthen digital health skills and promote health innovations. The European Health Data Space (EHDS) ⁽³⁾ optimises health data use to enhance healthcare, drive innovation and support policymaking. The XiA Project ⁽⁴⁾ empowers healthcare professionals with skills for real-world application of EHDS-related standards.

The BeWell ⁽⁵⁾ partnership develops digital health competencies for the health workforce. Seven training projects ⁽⁶⁾ strengthen digital skills for (non-)clinical staff, crucial for transforming health systems.

Another action ⁽⁷⁾ integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare by building expert communities, promoting education for healthcare providers, and supporting policymaking.

MS also receive direct grants to establish Health Data Access Bodies (HDAB) ⁽⁸⁾, and a capacity-building project enhances HDAB's staff skills, supporting innovation and AI-driven advancements.

The European Partnership Transforming Health and Care Systems ⁽⁹⁾ under Horizon Europe enhances the availability, skills and wellbeing of the healthcare workforce and boosts healthcare digitalisation. Five research projects ⁽¹⁰⁾ target the resilience and mental wellbeing of this workforce.

The Commission also offers country-specific support on workforce through the Recovery and Resilience Facility ⁽¹¹⁾, the Technical Support Instrument, ⁽¹²⁾ and the Cohesion Policy ⁽¹³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ OECD/European Commission (2024), *Health at a Glance: Europe 2024: State of Health in the EU Cycle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b3704e14-en>.
Commission Communication on Labour and skills shortages in the EU: an action plan, COM(2024) 131 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52024DC0131>) page 2 and 14.

⁽²⁾ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=en>.

⁽³⁾ European Health Data Space Regulation (EHDS) https://health.ec.europa.eu/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/european-health-data-space-regulation-ehds_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/ehds-action/projects-supporting-ehds_en <https://brudhi.iscte-iul.pt/2025/01/21/introducing-the-xia-project-transforming-healthcare-through-digital-interoperability-education/>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://bewell-project.eu/>.

⁽⁶⁾ Skills and Healthcare: training opportunity for Health Professionals under the EU4Health Programme: https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/news/skills-and-healthcare-training-opportunity-health-professionals-under-eu4health-programme-2023-10-16_en.

⁽⁷⁾ EU-funded projects contributing to the implementation of the European Health Data Space: https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-funded-projects-contributing-implementation-european-health-data-space-2025-03-28_en.

⁽⁸⁾ EU-funded projects contributing to the implementation of the European Health Data Space: https://hadea.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-funded-projects-contributing-implementation-european-health-data-space-2025-03-28_en.

⁽⁹⁾ European Partnership on Transforming Health and Care Systems | THCS | Projekt | Fact Sheet | HORIZON | CORDIS | European Commission <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101095654/fr>.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Resilience and mental wellbeing of the health and care workforce | Programme | HORIZON | CORDIS | European Commission https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/HORIZON_HORIZON-HLTH-2023-CARE-04-02/en.

⁽¹¹⁾ Recovery and Resilience Facility https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en.

⁽¹²⁾ Technical Support Instrument (TSI): https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en.

⁽¹³⁾ Cohesion Policy: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/2021-2027_en.