

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001684/25
to the Commission
Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)
(28 April 2025)

Subject: Dramatic deterioration of mental health services

According to the latest figures, 46% of EU citizens have experienced an emotional or psychosocial problem in the last year, while 20% of young people aged 15-19 live with a mental health disorder. 22% even reported that their medical needs were not being met.

The unacceptable state of mental health structures is the result of the continual anti-grassroots policy followed by governments, most recently demonstrated by the law just passed by the Nea Dimokratia Government. As part of the so-called 'psychiatric reform', a single network of mental health services has been created, involving public and private sector participation and entailing the closure of two of the three remaining National Health Service hospitals specialising in psychiatry. Care for the mentally ill is deteriorating dramatically and is becoming a goldmine for private clinics and NGOs, also thanks to the EU's push for 'de-institutionalisation'.

In light of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What view does it take of the fact that the single network of mental health services is leading to the dramatic deterioration of mental health services, with the further closure of the two psychiatric hospitals and the involvement of NGOs and civil non-profit companies, since it is based on criteria relating to the profitability of the groups involved rather than treatment, which stems from the cost-benefit policy and paves the way for further commercialisation and privatisation of health services?
2. What view does it take of the fact that the mental health of young people is deteriorating, with 49% of young people not receiving the necessary support, due to the strategy — followed by the EU and national governments — of understaffing and shutting down structures at EU level?

Submitted: 28.4.2025

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

1. According to Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ⁽¹⁾, the responsibility for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care, including mental health services, rests with the Member States.

The Commission adopted a communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health ⁽²⁾ in June 2023 with 20 flagship initiatives and EUR 1.3 billion in funding opportunities. It has the main objective of addressing mental health issues through a holistic, prevention-oriented and cross-sectoral approach. Through one of the flagship initiatives, Member States receive tailored support from the World Health Organisation to reform mental health systems ⁽³⁾. The Commission also regularly discusses the challenges and progress of mental health policies in the Member States in the subgroup on mental health of the Public Health Expert Group ⁽⁴⁾.

2. The Commission is aware of the mental health challenges faced by young people ⁽⁵⁾ and is supporting Member States in capacity-building through the implementation of best practices targeting young people ⁽⁶⁾, a multidisciplinary training and exchange programme for health and other professionals working with young people, and the development of a prevention toolkit together with Unicef ⁽⁷⁾.

The mission letter to the Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare includes the priority of addressing the impact of social media and excessive screentime on wellbeing and mental health of young people.

Based on this, the Commission plans to launch an EU-wide inquiry to start an evidence-based debate on the issue. The specific scope, methodology, and timeline of the inquiry are being discussed.

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

⁽²⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/com_2023_298_1_act_en.pdf.

⁽³⁾ [https://www.who.int/europe/activities/partnering-with-the-european-union-\(eu\)-to-tackle-mental-health-challenges#:~:text=WHO%20is%20partnering%20with%20the%20European%20Commission%20to,to%20take%20a%20comprehensive%20approach%20to%20mental%20health](https://www.who.int/europe/activities/partnering-with-the-european-union-(eu)-to-tackle-mental-health-challenges#:~:text=WHO%20is%20partnering%20with%20the%20European%20Commission%20to,to%20take%20a%20comprehensive%20approach%20to%20mental%20health).

⁽⁴⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/non-communicable-diseases/expert-group-public-health_en.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dyna/bp-portal/submission/search?call=Mental%20Health>.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://eu-promens.eu/eu-promens>.

⁽⁷⁾ <https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/european-commission-and-unicef-announce-new-partnership-improve-health-outcomes#:~:text=The%20three-year%20partnership%20%E2%80%93%20Promoting%20a%20comprehensive%20C%20prevention-oriented,consumption%20among%20children%20in%2029%20countries%20across%20Europe>.