

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001828/25
to the Commission
Dan-Ştefan Motreanu (PPE)
(6 May 2025)**

Subject: Addressing loneliness as a public health issue in Europe

A recent study by the Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) titled 'Loneliness in Europe — Determinants, Risks and Interventions', reveals that 13% of Europeans feel lonely very often or all the time, with 36% reporting occasional loneliness. The study emphasises that loneliness affects not only the elderly but also younger generations, particularly 'Generation Z' (15-30 years old), whose heavy presence on social media contributes to this growing trend.

The study highlights significant socioeconomic disparities, with people living in isolation being at a higher risk of experiencing health issues. Loneliness is identified as a public health concern, as isolated individuals are 22% more likely to develop chronic diseases.

The JRC encourages public authorities and non-governmental organisations to become more actively involved, as isolated individuals often rely more on local and national authorities for support than on their social networks.

Given the increasing prevalence of loneliness across various demographics, what measures does the Commission intend to take to promote social inclusion and improve mental health support across Europe?

Submitted: 6.5.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(22 August 2025)**

Loneliness is a complex and widespread issue that affects people of all ages and backgrounds. It is a risk factor for mental and physical health.

The Commission, through its flagship initiatives of the communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health ⁽¹⁾, supports Member States ⁽²⁾ in identifying best practices ⁽³⁾ and improving prevention and support strategies for mental health issues ⁽⁴⁾, especially for vulnerable populations.

The President of the Commission announced in her political guidelines ⁽⁵⁾ the launch of an EU-wide inquiry into how social media affects well-being. The Commission is developing the format, content and modalities for this inquiry.

Moreover, the Commission has developed a non-exhaustive mapping of loneliness interventions in the EU ⁽⁶⁾, which are mostly carried out by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or local authorities, but often with the financial support of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

The ESF+ supports the development of initiatives that foster social ties through employment, education, and social inclusion. The EU contribution for investments in social inclusion is of EUR 30 billion.

All Member States comply with the requirement under the ESF+ Regulation ⁽⁷⁾ to allocate at least 25% of their resources under shared management to foster social inclusion.

This includes targeted actions for vulnerable people and marginalised communities who are at higher risk of loneliness, for example elderly people who are disproportionately affected by loneliness ⁽⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/comprehensive-approach-mental-health_en.

⁽²⁾ <https://mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu/the-joint-action/>.

⁽³⁾ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dyna/bp-portal/submission/search?call=Mental%20Health>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6317c605-5f5d-4d4f-9c8a-d5c93e869814_en?filename=ncd_tracking-framework-mh_en.pdf.

⁽⁵⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf.

⁽⁶⁾ https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/projects-and-activities/survey-methods-and-analysis-centre/loneliness/loneliness-interventions_en.

⁽⁷⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1057/oj/eng>.

⁽⁸⁾ In Romania, the Geras (generating efficient, fast, active, sustainable integrated services for the elderly) project tackled isolation among over 220 elderly people with tailored support and community-building initiatives. The total budget from 2019 to 2022 was of EUR 558 647.75 (EU contribution: EUR 474 850.59). <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/projects/supporting-dignity-and-inclusion-how-geras-project-transformed-lives-romania>.