

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003626/25
to the Commission
Romana Jerković (S&D)
(18 September 2025)

Subject: Commission support for the Member States on ME/CFS research, data collection and medical education

The European Parliament resolution of 18 June 2020 on myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) ⁽¹⁾, an illness recognised by the WHO as a neuroimmune disease (internationally classified as ICD-10 G93.3 and more recently ICD-11 8E49), called for increased biomedical research and funding, harmonised EU-wide prevalence data and improved medical education to address the profound and devastating human and economic burden of the illness.

Five years later:

there is still no harmonised data collection system for ME/CFS in place;

prevalence and burden reporting remain voluntary and inconsistent across the Member States;

EU-funded tools called for in the resolution have not been implemented as a mandatory platform;

patients continue to experience profound neglect, stigma and unmet needs, as documented in the European ME Alliance pan-European survey ⁽²⁾, highlighting disparate services and poor patient outcomes.

Given the lack of tangible progress:

1. How is the Commission supporting the Member States in establishing a research strategy and funding a harmonised ME/CFS data collection and reporting system to determine the prevalence, aetiology and pathogenesis of ME/CFS, and what is the Commission's timeline for implementation?
2. How is the Commission assisting the Member States in integrating ME/CFS education into medical curricula and postgraduate training, ensuring that it aligns with international clinical guidelines and includes competencies, assessments and audits?

Submitted: 18.9.2025

Answer given by Ms Zaharieva on behalf of the European Commission
(6 November 2025)

The Commission recognises the need to support research on Myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), and the Health Cluster Work Programme of Horizon Europe ⁽¹⁾ has recently offered funding opportunities ⁽²⁾.

The Commission also supports the new European partnership for Brain Health ⁽³⁾, which is expected to start in January 2026, and which should also cater to the needs of researchers in the ME/CFS area.

Horizon Europe will continue to provide funding opportunities ⁽⁴⁾ for further research on ME/CFS. The European Health Data Space ⁽⁵⁾, which aims to improve health data exchange across the EU and access to those data for research could eventually provide a framework for harmonising data of different disorders, including ME/CFS.

Regarding assisting Member States in integrating ME/CFS education into the curricula of medical higher education institutions, the Commission emphasises the importance of quality assurance in education, which aligns with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

¹ European Parliament resolution of 18 June 2020 on additional funding for biomedical research on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (OJ C 362, 8.9.2021, p. 2).

² European ME Alliance, 'A Shocking Indictment of European Research and Healthcare Policies for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis', 7 April 2024, <https://www.europeanmealliance.org/emea-pan-european-survey-pr-uk.shtml>.

⁽¹⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en.

⁽²⁾ Opportunities include a 2025 call topic 'Tackling high-burden for patients, under-researched medical conditions' (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/HORIZON-HLTH-2025-01-DISEASE-07>), and a similar one in 2024 (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-hlth-2024-disease-03-14-two-stage>). In 2023, projects funded under the topic 'Relationship between infections and non-communicable diseases' (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/HORIZON-HLTH-2023-DISEASE-03-07>) include one also studying ME/CFS (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101136582>) and another studying diseases caused by the post-acute phase of COVID-19 infection (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101137196>), where the knowledge gained will also benefit the field of ME/CFS.

⁽³⁾ <https://www.brainhealth-partnership.eu/>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>.

⁽⁵⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-digital-health-and-care/european-health-data-space-regulation-ehds_en.

These standards serve as a robust framework for ensuring that curricula and postgraduate training programs meet high quality benchmarks.

While the Commission fully respects academic freedom and institutional autonomy and therefore does not direct or prescribe the content of curricula, it actively encourages Member States and educational institutions to incorporate the ESG into their education systems.

The Commission consistently refers to ESG across educational initiatives, reinforcing the principles adopted at the European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference in 2015 ⁽⁶⁾, which have now become the standard for educational quality assurance throughout Europe.

⁽⁶⁾ <https://ehea.info/page-ministerial-conference-yerevan-2015>.