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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(3.3.2026)

According to Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Member States are responsible for the organisation and delivery of their health services and medical care. Principle 16 of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan¹ underscores the right to healthcare. The Commission supports Member States in upholding this principle through projects aimed at systemic improvements of health systems².

The challenge of disparities in access to healthcare in Spain is stressed in the 2025 European Semester Country Report³. Member States can use funding under the recovery and resilience plan (RRP)⁴, the Technical Support Instrument⁵, and the Cohesion Policy⁶ to improve access to healthcare. The Spanish RRP⁷ includes investments and reforms to strengthen the health system with an estimated cost of around EUR 2.4 billion. The 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy programmes for Spain, including the programme of Castilla y León⁸, provide complementary investments of around 1.56 billion.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan puts emphasis on equal access to screening, diagnosis and treatment, for example through the 2022 Council Recommendation on cancer screening⁹. The Joint Action eCAN Plus¹⁰ is scaling up e-health and telemedicine services, including for patients in rural and remote areas, supported by EUR 20 million and including the participation of Spain. Finally, the European Cancer Inequalities Registry supports Member States by highlighting inequalities and challenges in cancer prevention and care, including analyses of geographical and rural disparities in access to cancer services. The initiative helps Member States identify gaps and areas for action to better guide investments at national and regional level.

¹ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/european-pillar-social-rights-building-fairer-and-more-inclusive-european-union/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan_en.

² Guidelines on access to healthcare for people with disabilities: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c2959f58-d63d-11f0-8da2-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>; The role of healthcare in reducing poverty: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e86e91df-a97a-11f0-89c6-01aa75ed71a1> Affordability of healthcare: [https://www.who.int/europe/teams/office-for-health-systems-financing-\(barcelona\)](https://www.who.int/europe/teams/office-for-health-systems-financing-(barcelona)).

³ https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/a712afe4-d94e-4333-8333-e8bc1ab63f1e_en?filename=ES_CR_SWD_2025_209_1_EN_autre_document_travail_service_part1_v4.pdf.

⁴ Recovery and Resilience Facility: https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en.

⁵ Technical Support Instrument (TSI): https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en.

⁶ Cohesion Policy: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/2021-2027_en.

⁷ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/country-pages/spains-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en.

⁸ The 2021-2027 European Regional Development Fund Programme for Castilla y León, with almost EUR 13 million for the deployment of technological solutions to enhance the resilience, capacity and sustainability of the public health system; and the renewal and acquisition of high-technology equipment in regional hospitals to improve the quality of healthcare services and guarantee access to care for all citizens.

⁹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2022.473.01.0001.01.ENG.

¹⁰ <https://ecanja.eu/>.