

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000363/26
to the Commission
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(28 January 2026)**

Subject: Ensuring EU funding and accountability to address healthcare workforce shortages

Healthcare workforce shortages continue to challenge the EU's resilience and the quality of its health systems. Targeted investments are essential to support healthcare professionals, maintain high-quality patient care and protect patient safety. EU programmes (such as EU4Health, Horizon Europe, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility) could help alleviate the burden on health systems by supporting recruitment and retention of staff, fatigue and burnout programmes, training and mentorship schemes, and clinical testing of digital technologies. Additionally, adopting innovative technologies can complement these efforts by enhancing efficiency, reducing administrative burdens, and allowing staff to devote more time to patients.

1. What specific measures will the Commission implement to ensure that the aforementioned funding programmes prioritise and increase funding for initiatives aimed at improving the healthcare workforce situation over the coming 10 years?
2. Would the Commission consider encouraging the Member States to report, through the European Semester, on their measures and investments concerning workforce capacity and healthcare system efficiency, thereby facilitating the evaluation of the status quo and the tracking of progress, promoting accountability, and ensuring that investments deliver tangible improvements for workers and patients?
3. How does the Commission plan to secure adequate funding to address healthcare workforce shortages in the next multiannual financial framework?

Submitted: 28.1.2026

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(27 April 2026)**

Health workforce shortages are an important challenge. In accordance with Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU ⁽¹⁾, EU action shall respect Member States' responsibilities for the management of health services, including staffing levels, and the allocation of the resources assigned to such services.

The Commission provides funding to support Member States in addressing health workforce challenges. The EU4Health Programme supports initiatives such as the Joint Action Heroes on health workforce planning ⁽²⁾, digital skills projects ⁽³⁾, the Nursing Action ⁽⁴⁾, and the mental health survey ⁽⁵⁾.

Erasmus+ supports the BeWell action ⁽⁶⁾. Horizon Europe funds relevant research initiatives ⁽⁷⁾. The European Social Fund+ supports the training and reskilling of the healthcare workforce.

Member States have allocated EUR 42.7 billion to healthcare in their national recovery and resilience plans, which also support the healthcare workforce.

The European Semester highlights health workforce challenges in country reports for all Member States and, in several cases, through country-specific recommendations.

The Commission's proposal for the next multiannual financial framework provides for funding opportunities on health, including for strengthening the health workforce (for example, the specific activities listed in Article 37(1), point (b), of the proposal for the European Competitiveness Fund) ⁽⁸⁾.

In addition, the Commission's proposal on national and regional partnership plans (NRPPs) envisions that Member States could use their NRPPs to support health investments addressing challenges identified in the European Semester and in line with the objectives identified in Article 3.1(c)(iv) of the proposal for NRPPs.

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

⁽²⁾ <https://www.agenas.gov.it/ricerca-e-sviluppo/ricerca-internazionale/personale-sanitario-ri/heroes-health-workforce-to-meet-health-challenges>.

⁽³⁾ EU4Health programme: https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/2022-eu4health-work-programme_en; AMR EDUCare <https://www.amreducare.eu/>; e-Hospital4Future: <https://eh4future.eu/>; GESEA Educational Programme; DigiCanTrain: <https://digantrain.turkuamk.fi/contact-us/>; DDS-MAP <https://ddsmmap.easpd.eu/>; TRANSITION: <https://ehma.org/projects/transition/>; EHMA: <https://hpass.healthworkforce.eu/>.

⁽⁴⁾ EU4Health programme, 2024: https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/2024-eu4health-work-programme_en.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12709-52483-81031>.

⁽⁶⁾ BeWell: <https://bewell-project.eu/>.

⁽⁷⁾ Under Cluster Health, Destination 4, 'Ensuring equal access to innovative, sustainable, and high-quality healthcare' and also via the European Partnership for Transforming Health and Care Systems which runs between 2023-2029.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025PC0555>.