

EN

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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(21.4.2026)

According to Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union¹, Member States are responsible for organising and delivering health services and medical care. The EU supports Member States with tools and initiatives such as technical assistance, knowledge sharing, funding and policy guidance.

The European Semester provides a framework to identify and address policy challenges in Member States, ensuring coordination at EU level while safeguarding the principle of subsidiarity. The latest European Semester Polish country report's health annex² shows that Poland's health system is comparatively hospital-centred. Poland had one of the highest numbers of hospital beds per 1000 population in 2023, 6.3 vs 5.1 for the EU, with concurrent low occupancy rates.

However, Poland has not received a country specific recommendation regarding the closure of maternity wards. The findings in the health annex are analytical in nature and do not, in themselves, entail a recommendation to close facilities. Decisions on the organisation of hospital networks, including maternity wards, remain a national competence. To the Commission's knowledge, there is no direct link between analyses presented under the European Semester and the closure of maternity wards in Poland as raised by the Honourable Member.

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

² https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2025-european-semester-country-reports_en.