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Answer given by Ms Lahbib
on behalf of the European Commission
(21.5.2026)

In its formal response¹ to the ‘My Voice, My Choice’ European Citizens’ Initiative, the Commission does not introduce a new funding area under the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)². One of the specific objectives of the ESF+, set out in Article 4(1)(k), is that of enhancing equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services, including access to person-centred care including healthcare. Therefore, the ESF+ can support initiatives, selected at national level, that aim to ensure and enhance equal and timely access to healthcare services. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to enhance social cohesion and improve the overall quality of life for everyone living in the EU.

The Commission Communication³ explicitly states that any Member State action in response to this initiative would have to remain fully neutral as to where the patients come from, and could not therefore be targeted or limited to patients from other Member States.

The Commission’s follow up to the initiative is fully in line with EU law and the division of competences between the EU and the Member States. In its formal response, the Commission recalls that any financial support for Member State action promoting health must comply with the limitations set out in Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. Therefore, the Commission stresses that it is for Member States to decide whether they want to allocate resources received through ESF+ to abortion care, and that Member States remain competent for organising the delivery of this health service.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52026XC01383>.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1057>.

³ See footnote 1.