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Answer given by Ms Lahbib

on behalf of the European Commission

(18.5.2026)

The Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030¹ recognises the crucial role of men and boys, as agents and beneficiaries of gender equality. It recognises that gender inequalities significantly impact access to healthcare and that gender norms associated with traditional masculinity can adversely affect men and boys' health, including discouraging help-seeking and increasing engagement in harmful behaviours.

The Strategy refers to gender mainstreaming in health research under the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe)² and into the health actions of the EU, including the EU4Health programme³. The Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health⁴ supports a comprehensive and inclusive life-course approach that focuses on effective prevention and access to care for all population groups, including men.

Life expectancy and healthy longevity are extensively covered in the Health at a Glance 2024 report⁵ and informed actions under the EU4Health programme.

The EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) acquis⁶, comprising the Framework Directive⁷ and related OSH Directives, ensures a minimum level of protection against OSH risks and requires employers to carry out a risk assessment and implement preventive and protective measures, also considering gender aspects. The EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027⁸ aims to improve prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses and addresses also psychosocial risks at work. The Gender Equality Strategy refers to the upcoming Healthy Workplace Campaign on mental health and psychosocial risks at work of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in 2026⁹.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/document/1f5fa936-9fba-4435-93f5-32fa220bac82_en.

² https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/health_en.

³ https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union_en.

⁴ https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/comprehensive-approach-mental-health_en.

⁵ https://health.ec.europa.eu/state-health-eu/health-glance-europe/health-glance-europe-2024_en.

⁶ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/rights-work/health-and-safety-work_en.

⁷ Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1989/391/2008-12-11/eng>.

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0323>.

⁹ https://commission.europa.eu/document/1f5fa936-9fba-4435-93f5-32fa220bac82_en.