

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001291/26
to the Commission
Elena Nevado del Campo (PPE)
(27 March 2026)**

Subject: Strategic autonomy of the European Union and preparedness for health crises in the next multiannual financial framework

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the European Union's dependence on third countries for the supply of critical medical products. In future health crises, this dependency could compromise the European Union's ability to respond quickly and effectively.

The European Union has taken steps to strengthen health emergency preparedness and open strategic autonomy. However, concerns remain about the European manufacturing capacity for certain critical medical products and the existence of sufficient strategic reserves. Products such as medical gloves have highlighted a structural dependence on external suppliers owing to differences in production costs.

I therefore wish to ask the Commission:

1. What measures is the Commission taking to strengthen the European Union's strategic autonomy in the supply of essential medical products, in order to ensure preparedness for future health crises?
2. How does the Commission intend to ensure the availability of sufficient manufacturing capacities and strategic reserves within the European Union for these essential products?
3. Has the Commission carried out any assessments of the European Union's strategic dependencies on critical medical products, and what measures does it propose with a view to reducing such dependencies?

Submitted: 27.3.2026

**Answer given by Mrs Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(15 June 2026)**

In 2021, the Commission established the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (DG HERA) with the mandate to improve preparedness and response to serious cross-border threats to medical countermeasures. This implies strengthening the resilience of supply chains and the EU's strategic autonomy.

In 2025, the Commission adopted a new strategy ⁽¹⁾ for medical countermeasures that explains its work so far and presents a number of key initiatives for the future.

In an end-to-end approach, building from a thorough threat analysis, DG HERA supports the development of new vaccines, reserving production capacity in case a crisis hits and building critical stocks with national authorities.

As part of the next Multiannual Financial Framework, the Commission proposed to continue funding this end-to-end approach through the health and biotech window of Horizon Europe and the European Competitiveness Fund, for the development of new countermeasures and the resilience of their supply chains.

In addition, a new instrument for the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Union Support for Health Emergency Preparedness and Response ⁽²⁾, has been proposed to support more operational activities to prevent, prepare for and respond to health emergencies, such as early warning and surveillance systems, training and exercises, stockpiling and the direct procurement and distribution of countermeasures in emergencies. This combination of instruments would contribute to strengthening the strategic autonomy of the EU for health preparedness.

The new Pharmaceutical Regulation ⁽³⁾ and the proposed Critical Medicines Act ⁽⁴⁾ also aim at identifying and addressing vulnerabilities and excessive dependencies in the supply chain of critical medicines.

⁽¹⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-emergency-preparedness-and-response-hera/preparedness/medical-countermeasures-strategy_en.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/union-civil-protection-mechanism-and-union-support-health-emergency-preparedness-and-response_en.

⁽³⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/medicinal-products/reform-eu-pharmaceutical-legislation_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/medicinal-products/critical-medicines-act_en.