

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002261/26
to the Commission
Sérgio Gonçalves (S&D)
(3 June 2026)**

Subject: EU support for the healthcare systems of the EU's outermost regions

The Commission's 2022 strategy for the EU's outermost regions (ORs) recognised that, while their healthcare systems vary, these regions are generally characterised by lower healthcare capacity and fewer healthcare professionals than national and EU averages. ORs also have, on average, lower life expectancy rates and particularly high infant mortality rates, as well as a greater risk of tropical disease outbreaks and pollution-related illnesses.

In the 2022 strategy, the Commission outlined measures it would take to address these issues, such as improving the accessibility, quality and sustainability of the healthcare systems of the ORs through the European Social Fund Plus and the European Regional Development Fund, and addressing the ORs' specific vulnerabilities in the work programmes of the Commission's Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority.

In view of the forthcoming renewed strategy for the ORs, could the Commission clarify the following:

1. How does it assess the implementation and results of health-related measures announced in the 2022 strategy?
2. How does it assess current access to healthcare, medical capacity and availability of medicine in the ORs?
3. Will the forthcoming strategy include further measures to support the healthcare systems of the ORs?

Submitted: 3.6.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(15 July 2026)**

The Commission remains fully committed to supporting the outermost regions (ORs), including in the area of health.

The assessment of the implementation of the 2022 strategy for the ORs is presented in the Commission Staff Working Document published in October 2024 ⁽¹⁾.

This assessment takes stock of progress made across the strategy's priorities, including actions relevant to health, and confirms the continued need for tailored support that addresses the specific challenges of the ORs.

The Commission has supported health-related action in the ORs through several EU instruments, including cohesion policy funds, EU4Health ⁽²⁾ and Horizon Europe ⁽³⁾.

Support at EU level complements Member States' efforts to render health systems more resilient and accessible and to reduce inequalities, while respecting Member States' primary responsibility for the organisation and delivery of healthcare. These instruments contribute to strengthen resilience, access to care, prevention, workforce capacity and innovation in the ORs.

The forthcoming strategy for the ORs will also take into account the specific situation and needs of these regions. It is expected to also address health both as a fundamental need for citizens and as a key policy priority for ensuring the resilience of the outermost regions facing external shocks.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2024) 435 final: Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of the communication 'Putting people first, securing sustainable and inclusive growth, unlocking the potential of the EU's Outermost Regions'.

⁽²⁾ Established by Regulation (EU) 2021/522, the EU4Health programme brings an EU added value and complements the policies of the Member States: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2021.107.01.0001.01.ENG.

⁽³⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en.