

EN

E-002342/2026

Answer given by Mr Dombrovskis
on behalf of the European Commission
(31.7.2026)

The reform of the Stability and Growth Pact put in place a balanced framework that accommodates spending on common priorities of the EU while maintaining sound and sustainable public finances in Member States.

Regulation 2024/1263 indicates that social and economic resilience is a common priority in the EU¹. As a result, investments in health-sector preparedness and resilience may be put forward in Member States' medium-term fiscal-structural plans within a package of investments and reforms that underpin a more gradual fiscal adjustment, up to seven years instead of four years. This provides for an important incentive for Member States to implement reforms and investments in the area of health-sector preparedness and resilience.

The national escape clause has been activated in March 2025 due to the urgent need to step up defence capabilities. This limited and temporary flexibility has been duly framed in scope in order to preserve fiscal sustainability. Concretely, eligible expenditure is limited to increases in expenditure under classification of the functions of government (COFOG) division 02.

More generally, within its supporting role², the Commission encourages health system preparedness and resilience. The EU Recovery and Resilience Facility has provided large-scale financial support to strengthen and build resilient health systems in the EU, including investments and structural reforms worth EUR 42 billion³. More recently, the EU Preparedness Union Strategy⁴ recognises that investing in resilient health care systems, especially in hospital services and enhanced stockpiling of critical medical equipment, medicines and other medical materials, can help protect Europe in the event of health and other emergencies⁵.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1263/oj/eng>.

² According to Art. 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the definition health policy and the organisation and delivery of health services is a competence of Member States.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic_analysis/scoreboard_thematic_analysis_healthcare.pdf (2024).

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/preparedness_en, JOIN (2025) 130 final of 26 March 2025.

⁵ https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-emergency-preparedness-and-response-hera/preparedness/medical-countermeasures-strategy_en, COM/2025/529 final of 9 July 2025.