

**Question for written answer E-001072/2014
to the Commission
Rule 117
Małgorzata Handzlik (PPE)**

Subject: Standards of chronic pain treatment in the EU - high level of public health protection

Good health is one of the main concerns of European citizens, particularly in view of the rising costs of healthcare and the increasing incidence of cancer and various diseases associated with modern living. In accordance with Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in the context of its competences in the field of healthcare the EU seeks to achieve a high level of health protection in all European policies aimed in particular at improving public health. Unfortunately many inequalities persist in this area. A problem facing millions of patients in the EU is the lack of a coherent EU policy on issues relating to the treatment of chronic pain caused by cancer and chronic diseases.

Untreated pain not only represents a loss to society in the form of incapacity to work, but also means carers abandoning their jobs and the need to pay for additional help for patients suffering from untreated or improperly treated pain.

According to a UN report published on 1 February 2013, denying patients appropriate pain treatment amounts to a violation of their basic human rights. Harmonising national policies on access to pain therapy could definitely contribute to better implementation of EU competences in relation to the provision of a high level of health protection. In this connection, I would like to ask whether the Commission is planning to take action to harmonise pain alleviation treatment standards for patients suffering from cancer and chronic diseases, including by issuing guidelines for doctors, patients and loved ones about the possibilities, benefits and risks of chronic pain treatment.

Does the Commission have any current statistics on access to controlled analgesics in the Member States?