

**Question for written answer E-005090/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)

Subject: Rheumatic, Muscle and Skeletal System Diseases

Rheumatic, muscle and skeletal system diseases require the most funds compared with other groups of diseases. They represent a giant burden for the health protection and social insurance systems in all countries of the European Union. The frequency and burden of these diseases have particularly increased in the last 20 years and this problem is expected to grow unless effective measures are taken.

Rheumatic, muscle and skeletal system diseases comprise over 200 conditions suffered by 500 000 patients in Lithuania and more than 120 million patients in the European Union. Some of these conditions and diseases include: back pain, rheumatic arthritis, spondyloarthritis, osteoporosis, gout, osteoarthritis and paediatric rheumatic diseases. Recent scientific research confirms that rheumatic, muscle and skeletal system diseases are the main cause of disability (almost one third of disability cases in Europe are caused by these diseases).

Rheumatic, muscle and skeletal system diseases are the leading cause of acute and chronic pains. These diseases include 38% of job-related diseases; they are also the main cause of sick leave and early retirement. Hence, the rheumatic, muscle and skeletal systems have a major impact on quality of life.

What actions does the Commission intend to take and/or has already taken to improve the treatment and prevention of rheumatic, muscle and skeletal system diseases, and rehabilitation, thus reducing the burden of rheumatic, muscle and skeleton system diseases for EU citizens and communities?