

**Question for written answer E-006670/2014  
to the Council**

Rule 130

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Subject: Reducing the cost of new drugs for the treatment of hepatitis C

Some 170 million people around the world, of which 800 000 are in Spain, are chronically infected with the hepatitis C virus, which can result in serious conditions such as cirrhosis of the liver and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). New drugs have recently become available with a high success rate, shown to cure around 95% of patients treated without any major side-effects.

However the cost of the treatment, set by the pharmaceutical companies, is extremely high. This puts the drugs beyond the individual reach of most patients in need of them, while at the same time rendering them largely unaffordable to publicly-funded healthcare systems. Although the European Medicines Agency has authorised the treatment to be placed on the market, some countries, such as Spain, have not included it in their national healthcare systems because of its high cost.

At the last Health Council, in June 2014, it was decided to convene a meeting of experts to coordinate joint strategies by the Member States to bring down the market price of the treatment.

Can the Council describe the initiatives agreed on?

Can the Council say whether any approaches have been made to the United States to seek its mediation with the pharmaceutical company marketing this expensive treatment?