

**Question for written answer E-007070/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 130
José Blanco López (S&D)

Subject: Access to new anti-cancer drugs

Every year, 200 000 cases of cancer are diagnosed in Spain, and the corresponding figure for the European Union is 1.5 million. Despite the strides that have been made in combating cancer, the annual death toll from the disease in Spain is 100 000 and in the Union as a whole more than 700 000.

In August we learned that the Autonomous Community of Galicia had denied a novel drug treatment to a prostate cancer patient even though the drug in question, abiraterone, was indicated for use by the Agencia Española del Medicamento (the Spanish medicines agency). In fact, the Ombudsman had to step in to address the delays in placing on the market certain anticancer drugs already approved by the European Medicines Agency – delays of as much as 20 months according to the Spanish Society of Medical Oncology. It is suspected that the pharmaceutical companies were behind the delays as a ploy to increase the prices they could charge the health authority.

What view does the Commission take of the delay in getting novel medicines onto the market in Spain? Does the Commission have plans for any initiatives involving the pharmaceutical industry or the Member States to speed up the process and make these drugs accessible to all the people who need them?