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Draft answer given by Mr Andriukaitis
on behalf of the Commission
(7.4.2017)

Measures regulating the prices of medicines as well as the organisation of the health systems and the delivery of care are Member States' responsibility.

However, the Commission encourages Member States to cooperate in this area to ensure access to medicines, promote the rational use of medicines and improve the sustainability of pharmaceutical expenditure, in line with the Commission Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems¹.

The Council recently called upon the Member States to implement measures with a view to "strengthening the cost-effective use, availability, accessibility and affordability of medicines by implementing policies such as promoting public procurement and the role of generics and biosimilars, appropriate price-control policies and a rational use of medicines"².

To support Member States in their efforts to ensure the sustainability of their healthcare budgets, the Commission recently conducted a public consultation for an initiative to strengthen EU cooperation on health technology assessment³.

In the EU, most medicine shortages are dealt with at national level. However, the European Medicines Agency can be involved in certain situations, for example when a medicine shortage is linked to a safety concern or affects several Member States.

¹ Communication from the Commission on effective, accessible and resilient health systems; COM(2014) 215 final, of 4.4.2014

² Council conclusions on EPC- Commission Joint Report on health care and long-term care in the EU, adopted by the Council (ECOFIN) at its 3495th meeting held on 8 November 2016 in Brussels

³ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2016_sante_144_health_technology_assessments_en.pdf