

**Question for written answer E-002126/2019
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Tackling inequalities in the quality of, and access to, colorectal cancer screening programmes

Currently, 146 000 European citizens die each year of colorectal cancer (CRC). It is estimated that the figure will increase to over 206 000 deaths per year by 2035¹. This is alarming because CRC is preventable if effective screening programmes are implemented. Furthermore, access to screening could save up to EUR 8 billion in direct medical costs if all individuals were diagnosed at stage one².

However, the eradication of CRC is undermined by significant variation in the quality of, access to and awareness of preventative screening measures, in particular colonoscopy – the ‘gold standard’ preventative measure³.

The Commission recognises the existence of health inequalities in CRC prevention in its 2017 report entitled ‘Cancer Screening in the European Union’⁴ and the 2010 European guidelines for quality assurance in CRC screening and diagnosis⁵.

At a Parliament policy roundtable in November 2018 stakeholders stressed that eradicating CRC requires collaborative efforts among all stakeholders, including the Commission.

What specific plans does the Commission have to:

1. Promote the implementation of the European guidelines for quality assurance in CRC screening and diagnosis?
2. Encourage Member States to establish population-based CRC screening programmes?
3. Generate pan-European data on the economic and clinical burden of CRC on individuals and on society more broadly?

¹ Digestive Health Group, ‘Digestive Health Across Europe – Issues, challenges and inequalities’, United European Gastroenterology, 2018.

https://www.ueg.eu/epaper/UEG_DigestiveHealthAcrossEurope/index.html#20

² Belgian Cancer Registry, ‘Cancer Fact Sheet: Colorectal Cancer’, 2016.

http://kankerregister.org/media/docs/CancerFactSheets/2016/Cancer_Fact_Sheet_ColorectalCancer_2016.pdf

³ European guidelines for quality assurance in colorectal cancer screening and diagnosis, 2010.

<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e1ef52d8-8786-4ac4-9f91-4da2261ee535>

⁴ European Commission, ‘Cancer Screening in the European Union (2017) – Report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on cancer screening’ (tables on p. 85 and p. 86), 2017.

https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/major_chronic_diseases/docs/2017_cancerscreening_2ndreportimplementation_en.pdf

⁵ European guidelines for quality assurance in colorectal cancer screening and diagnosis, 2010.

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