

Question for written answer P-006279/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Brian Hayes (PPE)

Subject: EU action to support bereaved parents

The death of a child impacts every aspect of the lives of his or her parents: health, relationships, employment and social inclusion. Each year in the EU, around 125 000 babies and children under 20 die, leaving a quarter of a million parents bereaved of a child each year. Many more are bereaved of an adult son or daughter.

A child's death has been defined medically as a 'catastrophic stressor'. Studies have shown that the impact of this loss is more intense and longer-lasting than for any other bereavement. The high costs to individuals, families and society are shown by links to higher levels of depression, anxiety, illness, absence from work, premature death, relationship breakdown, the capacity to parent surviving children, and stress levels.

In the light of the above, what action is the Commission taking to:

1. improve the evidence base on the impact of the death of a child on family life and on parents' mental and physical health and employment, and identify and promote evidence-based interventions to support bereaved parents?
2. support Member States in developing appropriate welfare policies and employment practices that meet bereaved parents' needs and tackle their social exclusion?
3. encourage and enable networking across research, policy and practice with a view to improving outcomes for bereaved parents?