

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3925/07
by Marc Tarabella (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Multiple barriers to receipt of cross-border healthcare

In answer to my oral question H-0360/07¹ of 13 June 2007, the Commission announced that before the end of 2007 it intends to publish proposals aimed at improving healthcare within the European Union and, in particular, cross-border healthcare. It puts particular emphasis on the importance of improving information to consumers regarding their rights in this area.

Since then, my attention has been drawn to several dozen instances of barriers, refusals to reimburse costs, or discriminatory, bureaucratic and extremely slow reimbursement procedures designed to deter, or indeed penalise, patients having sought healthcare in another Member State.

Can the Commission indicate:

- what purpose will be served by providing patients with full information on their rights regarding access to cross-border healthcare if in practice they cannot exercise them or, even worse, if they are penalised financially by national authorities for doing so?

- what measures it can take to compel Member States to put an end to such practices?

- what steps can be taken by the hundreds of patients who have waited for months, in some cases for more than a year, for reimbursement of the costs of treatment received in another Member State or who have been refused reimbursement, to speed up the recognition of these existing rights, without having recourse to the courts, which is too costly, long and cumbersome a solution?

¹ Oral answer, 19.6.2007