

**Question for written answer E-004439/2020  
to the Council**  
Rule 138  
**Silvia Sardone (ID)**

Subject: Cuts to health-related spending

The pages of the agreement reached at the end of the interminable European Council contain some frankly absurd decisions. For example, the EU4Health Programme has been slashed, although it was intended to be a pillar in the health response to the coronavirus pandemic.

This programme was initially assigned a budget of EUR 9.4 billion – a sum which would have made it the largest ever health programme in financial terms.

However, leaders have agreed to slice EUR 7.7 billion from the programme, thus leaving only 1.4 billion in the pot. In so doing, the EU has created the most extraordinary paradox ever seen: in order to address the most serious health emergency in a century, it has cut rather than boosted health spending.

Can the Council answer the following questions:

1. How can it justify a decision so entirely inconsistent with the risks linked to the ongoing pandemic?
2. What are the funds slashed from the health budget to be used for?