

**Question for written answer E-005654/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Kostas Papadakis (NI)

Subject: Forcing workers to pay for their own tests at private testing centres

Workplaces, which fall under the responsibility of employers, are the main centres of transmission of COVID-19. Yet many large companies are placing the burden of responsibility on workers to get tested at their own expense. Working-class families and families with children of school age are also having to bear the high cost of getting tested.

In fact, not only are private testing centres making a lot of money during this pandemic, but the reliability of their results is questionable, as demonstrated recently in the case of the testing of staff working on board the Mein Schiff cruise ship.

Can the Commission say:

1. What is its view on the urgent need for all tests to be carried out free of charge by the public health system, including at places of work and at schools where there are cases?
2. Does it consider that businesses are taking advantage of the general public's health concerns and making money from tests and hospital charges during the pandemic, and what is its view on the need for private health facilities to be included in State plans without receiving any compensation?
3. What is its position on the fact that health – welfare, medical treatment and vaccines – is not a commodity but a social good, an inalienable right of people and workers, for which no one should pay?