

**Question for written answer E-006073/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Aurelia Beigneux (ID)

Subject: Acute flaccid myelitis: progress in research on the condition conducted under the Health Programme

A worrying illness is set to reappear in the autumn. Acute flaccid myelitis is a rare neurological condition which affects children around five years old. Since 2014, 'the virus has been returning in a two-year cycle, with a new generation who do not have immunisation and thus enable the virus to pick up again', according to Kevin Messacar, specialist in infectious diseases at the Children's Hospital Colorado. The disease is not yet present in Europe. But it is a mystery. It causes muscle atrophy in one or more limbs. In serious cases the brain stem is affected, impeding all the body's automatic functions, so that swallowing saliva and breathing become impossible. The symptoms resemble those of polio, a virus which has been virtually eradicated. Researchers have identified two main suspects – enteroviruses D68 and A71 – but are uncertain as to whether they are the real cause of the illness.

I would like to ask the following:

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe, what are the Commission's intentions regarding the promotion of research on acute flaccid myelitis under the Health Programme?