

Question for written answer E-006506/2020
to the Commission
Rule 138
Cindy Franssen (PPE)

Subject: The impact of COVID-19 on cancer diagnoses and screening in the EU

A recent study in Belgium showed that, because of COVID-19, no less than 5000 fewer cases of cancer were diagnosed between 1 March and 19 September 2020 than in the same period in 2019. There were considerably fewer diagnoses in March and April, in particular.

Breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening programmes were also temporarily put on hold between March and May, resulting in a 22% drop in diagnoses of colorectal cancer (for men and women in the 50-74 age group) and a 20% drop in breast cancer diagnoses in the 50-69 age group.

As a result, there is a high risk that a huge number of cancers will be detected late, with all the associated negative consequences. It is important to identify those people who have fallen through the net.

1. Does the Commission have comparable figures for the whole of the EU?
2. What measures can/will the Commission take to ensure rapid/up-to-date figures for screening programmes and diagnoses, so that rapid action can be taken in the event of sudden falls in the expected figures?
3. What measures could be taken to ensure that this does not recur in the event of a future pandemic?