

**Question for written answer E-000043/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Marianne Vind (S&D)

Subject: Rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) and pharmaceuticals

Over the last decade, it has become clear that Europe must tackle chronic conditions to protect the long-term sustainability of our health systems. Rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) constitute one of the most prevalent chronic condition categories in Europe, affecting over 100 million Europeans of all ages. The disability and workplace absences caused by these chronic systemic diseases cause pain and distress to the individual and come at a high cost to government budgets. Early diagnosis and treatment of RMDs using relevant medical therapies and non-pharmaceutical interventions can improve quality of life while reducing the need for surgery. Unfortunately, inequalities between European countries and regions affect access to rheumatologists, diagnosis and treatment for many people living with RMDs. Considering the recently published pharmaceutical strategy and lessons learned from the COVID-19 response:

1. Will the Commission use the pharmaceutical strategy to target the unmet medical needs of Europeans living with RMDs?
2. Is it considering incentives for enhanced collaboration between national health authorities, for instance in the area of joint cross-border procurement, provided there is the necessary facilitation by Member States?