

**Question for written answer E-000044/2021  
to the Commission  
Rule 138  
Marianne Vind (S&D)**

**Subject:** Rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) and employment

Rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) are chronic systemic diseases that commonly affect the joints but can affect any organ of the body. There are more than 200 RMDs that affect children and adults. Around Europe it is estimated that over 100 million people live with an RMD, many of working age. Research, prevention and the treatment of RMDs in Europe can therefore help to facilitate greater workplace participation, productivity and the sustainability of healthcare systems. The upcoming disability and workplace environment strategies are important milestones in fighting these challenges. Considering that RMDs account for around 60 % of all workplace health problems, that people with an RMD find it harder to access and stay in work, and that up to 70 % of rheumatoid arthritis patients become work-disabled within 5-10 years of symptom onset:

1. Is the Commission intending to address the employment needs of people with an RMD within its disability and workplace environment strategies, ensuring that support measures are adequately funded?
2. Will it recognise that many RMDs are chronic systemic diseases affecting multiple organs of the body as well as bones, muscles and joints, and that early diagnosis and treatment can greatly reduce disability and workplace absenteeism?