

**Question for written answer E-000450/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
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Subject: Effects of the lockdown on young people

The restrictive measures introduced to contain the pandemic are having significant psychological effects on people's lives: lower life expectancy, higher number of violent crimes and greater spread of mental illnesses, especially in younger age ranges.

A recent study¹ recommends that primary and secondary preventive measures be introduced to mitigate effects that in the long term may adversely affect young people's development.

Frequent depressive symptoms and anxiety have been reported in students on account of restrictions to their social lives caused by the lockdown². Sleep disorders, aggressive and antisocial behaviour, eating disorders and a rise in suicidal tendencies have been observed³. The incidence of suicidal impulses, in particular, has risen dramatically during the lockdown⁴.

In light of the above:

1. How and when does the Commission plan to tackle this emergency which will assume colossal proportions if no timely and effective action is taken?
2. Is it considering a relaxation of the lockdown measures imposed on children and young people in the EU's population, bearing in mind also the clinical development of COVID-19 documented in these age ranges, with positive cases mainly asymptomatic or at the very least benign?

¹ Psychological Symptoms and Behavioral Changes in Children and Adolescents During the Early Phase of COVID-19 Quarantine in Three European Countries, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2020.570164/full>

² Xie X, et al. Mental health status among children in home confinement during the coronavirus disease 2019 Outbreak in Hubei Province, China. JAMA Pediatr 2020 Apr 24; e201619. doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.1619

³ An Italian study on the impact the lockdown has had on children and teenagers in Italy during the pandemic, conducted by the Istituto Gaslini and the University of Genoa, reports that between 65% and 71% of young people have presented behavioural problems associated with the lockdown, displaying in particular a set of regressive-type symptoms such as fear of the dark, crying inconsolably, difficulties with falling sleep, anxiety and changes to the sleep-wake rhythm. <http://www.gaslini.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Indagine-Irccs-Gaslini.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m4095>