

**Question for written answer E-002473/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Jutta Paulus (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Use of gases in anaesthesia which have an impact on climate

Many medical associations around the world have issued statements highlighting the urgent need to reduce CO₂ emissions in the healthcare sector.¹ Moreover, the everyday use of volatile anaesthetics and nitrous oxide is of particular concern. They act as potent greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. For example, the commonly used desflurane has a greenhouse effect 2540 times stronger than that of CO₂. Technical possibilities for reuse of anaesthetics are available and are used in a few clinics. In its Pharmaceutical Strategy, under 'Flagship initiatives on quality and environmental sustainability', the Commission proposes 'to revise the pharmaceutical legislation to strengthen the environmental risk assessment and conditions of use for medicines, and take stock of the results of research under the innovative medicines initiative – 2022'.

1. Does the Commission intend to put environmental and climate aspects on an equal footing with pharmaceutical criteria in the review of pharmaceutical legislation announced for 2022? If not, what impact should environmental sustainability have on the authorisation of medicines in the future?
2. Is the Commission aware of any existing or planned projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a circular economy in the medical sector and what is it doing to promote such projects?
3. Is consideration being given to restricting the use of already approved active substances but which are extremely harmful to the climate or the environment?

¹ <https://www.bda.de/docman/alle-dokumente-fuer-suchindex/oeffentlich/empfehlungen/2138-oekologische-nachhaltigkeit-in-der-anaesthesiologie-und-intensivmedizin-2020-07/file.html>