

**Question for written answer E-004616/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Disparities regarding access to health and healthcare services

According to the Commission's Horizon 2020 work programme, inequalities regarding access to health and healthcare are among the four major challenges facing Europe. Indeed, the disparities are substantial, as illustrated by the statistics, with

life expectancy at birth varying widely across the Member States. In 2020, Bulgaria and Romania recorded the lowest life expectancies - 73.6 years and 74.2 years respectively - far below Switzerland and Norway, with life expectancies of 83.2 and 83.3 years respectively, a difference of 9.6 years.

Infant mortality rates also vary from 1.6 in Estonia and 2.1 in Sweden to 6.7 in Malta and 5.8 in Romania.

The latest available Eurostat data indicate that, since 2014, over 21% of the EU population has reported unmet healthcare requirements, citing financial reasons. Here again, there are major disparities, ranging from 9.3% in Cyprus to 50% in Ireland.

While responsibility for health care rests primarily with the Member State governments, the European Union has an ancillary role to play. In view of this, what measures have been taken or are being considered by the Commission to reduce disparities between the Member States regarding healthcare?