

**Question for written answer E-002417/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D)

Subject: A European strategy for hearing loss

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has played a greater role in health policy. It launched a European Health Union and followed that with initiatives such as the Beating Cancer Plan and a non-communicable diseases initiative.

With Europe becoming the oldest continent in the world, and within the United Nations' 2021-2030 Decade of Healthy Ageing, protecting the quality of life of ageing populations should be a priority for the Commission.

Hearing loss is a barrier to active ageing and is linked to social isolation and costly comorbidities, including cognitive decline, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. In 2021, the World Health Organization recommended the implementation of systematic hearing screening, followed by prompt treatment, such as cochlear implants. In reality, few of the 57.3 million Europeans living with disabling hearing loss are treated. Only 10 % of those who could benefit from cochlear implants receive them.

Untreated hearing loss costs Europe EUR 213 billion annually, which is EUR 49 billion more than the total EU budget for 2021.

In view of this:

1. What initiatives will the Commission put in place to help European citizens to actively age?
2. What steps will it undertake to address the rising burden of untreated hearing loss in the EU?