

**Question for written answer E-001658/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Predrag Fred Matic (S&D)

Subject: Tackling the issue of stigmatisation, prevention, testing and treatments of sexually transmitted infections across the EU

The rate of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the EU is constantly increasing. The stigmatisation, judgement and shame that surround STIs lead to discrimination, social exclusion, lack of testing, restricted access to evidence-based information and inadequate treatments. If untreated, STIs can cause serious damage to the reproductive system, lead to infertility, and cause severe issues in pregnancy. These problems disproportionately affect women in developing countries, especially in eastern Europe, migrant women, LGBTQI people and young people from low-income households. Although the EU HepHIV 2021 conference demonstrated the need for action, no significant EU policy changes in STI testing have been implemented since. The EU has funded no sexuality education programmes since 2014.

In October 2022, Ireland introduced [sexualwellbeing.ie](https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie), a free national, online service that provides people with at-home STI tests¹. Statistics show that a similar national campaign in the UK caused rates of STI testing to double, even in the most deprived areas.

Taking Ireland as an example and keeping in mind the most vulnerable and affected groups, what is the Commission planning to do to improve the access to information-based STI education and free testing and treatments across the Member States?

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¹ <https://www.sexualwellbeing.ie/sexual-health/sexually-transmitted-infections/sti-testing/home-sti-test/>.