

**Question for oral answer O-000080/2020
to the Council**

Rule 136

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on behalf of the Renew Group

Subject: Responding to non-communicable diseases during and after the COVID-19 crisis

COVID-19 has produced severe and fatal outcomes among high-risk groups such as people over 65, people with underlying comorbidities, and people with compromised immune systems or non-communicable diseases (NCDs). People with compromised immune systems are also at high risk of developing complications from COVID-19. NCDs are also the leading causes of mortality and disability in Europe.

Emerging evidence demonstrates how COVID-19 and NCDs interact and reinforce one another. Patients affected by NCDs are at greater risk of developing severe diseases and dying from COVID-19. COVID-19 has also severely exacerbated the burden of NCDs by disrupting routine chronic care, such as diagnostic and treatment. Furthermore, disruptions in the distribution of essential medicines, and limited access to health workers and support services have also critically affected the ongoing management of NCDs.

Moreover, the pandemic and measures taken in response to it (e.g. lockdowns or curfews) are increasing behavioural risk factors for NCDs such as tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. Actions need to be taken rapidly at EU and national levels, and governments must recognise the aggregated severity of NCDs and mitigate impacts on people and health systems. In the long-term, COVID-19 complications might have impacts on the general and mental health of Europeans, on healthcare systems and our economy.

1. Does the Council intend to tackle the prevention and management of NCDs in COVID-19 response measures at EU and national levels in the framework of the European Health Union Package?
2. Is the Council planning to adopt recommendations to address NCDs during and after the COVID-19 crisis?
3. In the planned revision of the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), would the Council be willing to advocate for the extension of the ECDC's responsibilities to include NCDs?
4. How will future EU epidemic preparedness efforts take into account the underlying conditions of NCDs?
5. What mitigation measures will the EU put in place to guarantee the provision of diagnostic, treatment, rehabilitation and palliation services for people living with NCDs?

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Lapses: 10/03/2021