**Question for written answer P-011044/2011**
**to the Commission**
Rule 117
**Frédérique Ries (ALDE)**

Subject: EU funding for research into aneuploidy

Down's syndrome (Trisomy 21) is less common than it was in the past, mainly as a result of prenatal screening, but, on average, one child in 700 is still born with the condition in Europe. The incidence is higher still for aneuploidy, the generic term for all diseases stemming from an extra or missing chromosome in the body's cells. Aneuploidy affects 1% of the population and is the leading cause of death among children between one and four years of age.

Down's syndrome is the most common genetic disease in Belgium, and there is much surprise in the scientific community at how little action the Commission is taking in this area. This is particularly surprising in view of the support that the Commission previously provided for research into aneuploidies – in particular, the various forms of trisomy – under the sixth framework research programme and the integrated AnEUploidy project (which was allocated EUR 12 million in funding) intended to improve understanding of the molecular mechanisms of aneuploidies. It would appear that financial support is no longer provided for this type of research under the current, seventh, framework research programme (2007-2013).

1. Can the Commission say whether this is in fact the case?

2. If it is, what objective reasons were there for discontinuing funding for such research under the seventh framework programme?

3. Can the Commission give an undertaking that it will make funding for research into these diseases a central part of the next, eighth, framework research programme (2014-2020)?