

**Priority question for written answer P-001863/2023/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Limitation of patient's freedom of choice of doctor in the context of corporate welfare in Italy

In line with Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the Italian constitution protects the right to health via Article 32, while Article 19, second paragraph of Law No 833 of 23 December 1978 guarantees the right to freely choose a doctor within the national health system.

However, Italian insurance policies oblige employees to choose from an exclusive list of doctors and healthcare facilities that have an agreement with the insurer. Employees seeking medical assistance outside this list receive less favourable reimbursement terms or no reimbursement at all, unlike in other Member States, where employees are free to choose their doctor within their private health insurance.

Considering that employees in Italy are not entitled to select their insurer, can only choose from a limited subset of doctors or healthcare facilities and receive less favourable reimbursement terms when seeking medical assistance outside those subsets, can the Commission clarify:

1. In the Commission's opinion, do such private health insurance policies offered by companies to their employees as a corporate welfare benefit limit patients' freedom to choose their doctor?
2. Is the free choice of a doctor conducive to the high level of human health protection mentioned in Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU?
3. Is the Commission aware of whether patients from other EU Member States have more freedom to choose their doctor?

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