

Parliamentary questions

15 December 2016

E-009459-16

Question for written answer
to the Commission
Rule 130
Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)

► **Subject: On access to employment for those affected by neurological disorders and chronic pain conditions**

 Answer(s)

Brain disorders and chronic pain conditions are two of the leading causes of long-term sick leave, and are growing in their impact as Europe's workforce ages. Therefore, it is very important to encourage and preserve the jobs of people affected by neurological disorders and ensure their reintegration into employment. Reintegrating people with chronic conditions such as these into employment is socioeconomically beneficial.

The Commission is called upon to encourage the Member States to acknowledge that accurate early diagnosis and appropriate treatment and management are necessary to enable employees affected by these chronic conditions to enjoy equitable employment opportunities.

The Commission is called upon, in close cooperation with the Member States, to work, together with their social partners, to clarify patients' rights, highlight successful workplace adjustments and reintegration actions — e.g. flexible working hours — and promote the use of the European Social Fund for such actions.

Original language of question: **LT**

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Answer given by Ms Thyssen on behalf of the Commission

The Commission attaches great importance to workers' health, safety and wellbeing, and consequently, to longer and sustainable working lives.

The 2014-2020 EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work⁽¹⁾, has set demographic change and ageing of the workforce as key priorities for action aiming at, *inter alia*, preventing any related chronic diseases and the promotion of rehabilitation and reintegration of workers. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work's Campaign (2016-2017) 'Healthy Workplaces for All Ages' raises awareness of this issue across the EU.

The guidance document accompanying the communication on a Safer and healthier work place for all,⁽²⁾ calls for more diversity-sensitive risk assessments and attention to specificities related to age, gender and other demographic characteristics. It includes practical tools for employers to address age-related and gender-related risks in risk assessments.

For the 2014-2020 programming period, Member States have committed to dedicate around 25.5% of their European Social Fund financial resources to social inclusion, in particular for measures related to active inclusion, with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability.

In addition, the Health Programme⁽³⁾ co-funds the 'PATH-WAYS' project⁽⁴⁾ which contributes to developing innovative approaches to promote the professional integration and reintegration of people with chronic diseases and to improve their employability.

(1 COM (2014)332.

- (2 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=148&newsId=2709&furtherNews=yes>)
- (3 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0282&from=EN>)
- (4 <http://www.path-ways.eu/>)

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http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/96681/VILJA_BLINKEVICIUTE_home.html