**SCQ: Healthcare Challenges in an Aging European Population**

### **Situation (S): Population Trends and Healthcare Cost Implications**

Europe is undergoing a significant demographic shift, with the proportion of people aged **65 and older** rising from **21.1% in 2022** to a projected **32.5% by 2100**. The **85+ age group** is expected to grow from **2.9% to nearly 10%** within the same period. This aging trend has profound **healthcare cost implications**, with **age-related public expenditure**projected to increase from **25.1% of GDP in 2022 to 26.5% by 2070**. Countries with higher elderly populations will experience more acute **financial and workforce pressures** in their healthcare systems.

### **Complication (C): Rising Costs and Systemic Strain**

* **Healthcare services are under growing pressure**, with increasing demand for **chronic disease management** and **long-term care**.
* **Workforce shortages** in geriatrics, nursing, and caregiving are becoming critical.
* **Disparities in healthcare funding** exist across EU countries, with some facing unsustainable increases in costs.
* **Balancing quality, accessibility, and cost-efficiency** remains a persistent challenge.

### **Question (Q): Policy and Systemic Reforms**

How can EU healthcare systems **adapt sustainably** to the growing aging population while ensuring **financial stability, workforce capacity, and equitable access** across all member states?

**Stakeholders**

EU member states, healthcare professionals, pensioners, insurance companies, governments.

### **Brief Overview of Additional Challenges**

* **Increased Demand for Services:** More elderly patients mean rising cases of **chronic illnesses** and higher **hospital admissions**.
* **Workforce Development:** Urgent need for **geriatrics training programs** and incentives to retain healthcare professionals.
* **Sustainable Financing:** Exploring **pension reform**, **public-private partnerships**, and **innovative healthcare funding models** to ease budgetary strain.

### **Bibliography**

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3. European Central Bank (2024). "Ageing Report: Economic and Budgetary Projections." [Available at](https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/economic-bulletin/focus/2024/html/ecb.ebbox202405_08~5f9531042f.en.html).