(English version)

Question for written answer E-001021/25
to the Commission
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(10 March 2025)

Subject: Absorption of NSRF funds by Greece

The absorption of NSRF funds in Greece appears to be progressing slowly, with many critical projects in the areas of infrastructure, innovation and the green transition at a standstill. Management problems and bureaucratic red tape are preventing the timely and effective use of resources, putting the achievement of the programme's objectives at risk.

In view of the above:

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the current absorption rate of NSRF funds in Greece and what are the main reasons for the delays?

2. Does the Commission intend to provide additional technical support or impose corrective measures to ensure the timely and effective implementation of projects?

3. How does the Commission assess the Greek Government's ability to complete the NSRF projects on time and avoid wasting funds?

Submitted: 10.3.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(12 May 2025)

Greece is among the best-performing countries in the implementation of Cohesion policy programmes, placing 5th in the EU with a payment rate of 15% compared to the EU average of 8.7%. According to the CPR ([1]) governing Cohesion Policy funding, the implementing period extents until December 2029, allowing adequate time for continued progress.

Greece has allocated some EUR 898 million among the programmes for technical assistance actions, including a dedicated Technical Assistance programme. Under this programme, some EUR 100 million is earmarked for enhancing the capacity of beneficiaries to support the effective implementation of programmes.

The Commission may also provide technical assistance for institutional strengthening and administrative capacity-building, through instruments such as peer-to-peer exchanges, dissemination of best practices, and targeted expert support.

Furthermore, a Member State, can request support via the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) ([2]) for reforms in key policy areas. Under TSI 2021, Greece received assistance to modernise the legal framework of the Public Investment Programme.

Through the Structural Reform Support Programme ([3]), Greece was also supported in defining its post-2020 regional development priorities and assessing the governance of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). Greece may submit further requests for support under the TSI 2026 cycle ([4]) that will be assessed based on their merit and on pre-determined criteria.

Regular progress meetings and performance reporting, enables the Commission to closely track implementation and ensure the timely and efficient use of EU funds.

([1]) Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

([2]) Article 5 of the regulation (EU) 2021/240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 February 2021 establishing a Technical Support Instrument OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 1-16 (BG, ES, CS, DA, DE, ET, EL, EN, FR, GA, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SL, FI, SV) https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/revenue-administration-and-public-financial-management/modernising-legal-framework-public-investment-programme-greece_en and the new legislative framework adopted in September 2024 (available in Greek https://epde.gr/portal/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/%CE%BD.-5140_30.9.2024_%CE%9D%CE%AD%CE%BF-%CE%91%CE%A0%CE%94%CE%95.pdf.

([3]) SRSP project 'Regional policy for Greece post 2020' aiming to support an improved performance of Regional and Cohesion Policy.

([4]) Assessment criteria include alignment with Country Specific Recommendations, and consideration of existing technical assistance funded under Cohesion Policy.