

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001087/26  
to the Commission  
Galato Alexandraki (ECR)  
(17 March 2026)**

**Subject:** State of the public health system in Greece and citizens' access to health services

According to recent reports and news articles, the Greek national health system (ESY) is facing severe staff shortages and significant failures in the operation of health structures. It is estimated that there are thousands of vacant doctors' and nurses' posts, and in many hospitals operating theatres and clinics remain closed due to a lack of staff.

Meanwhile, waiting times for planned surgeries can be as long as 6-8 months. Around 21.9% of citizens say they are not getting the treatment they need due to costs, organisational problems or a weakness in the health system. Moreover, private health payments remain particularly high, with citizens covering around 33% of total health expenditure. This percentage is significantly higher than the OECD average.

At the same time, low wages and difficult working conditions drive many doctors to migrate, further exacerbating staff shortages.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What is its assessment of the state of the Greek public health system and citizens' access to health services?
2. Are there any European control mechanisms to verify the use of European funds in the Greek health sector?
3. Does it intend to look into measures to reinforce the healthcare workforce and ensure equal access to health services for citizens?

Submitted: 17.3.2026

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission  
(11 May 2026)**

1. As per Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union <sup>(1)</sup>, Member States are responsible for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. EU tools and initiatives support Member States to strengthen health systems via knowledge sharing, technical assistance, funding and policy guidance. For example, the State of Health in the EU cycle <sup>(2)</sup> includes country-specific analyses, and the European Semester provides country-specific recommendations: (in 2020, 2022 and 2023, Greece received recommendations to ensure adequate and equal access to healthcare which reflected, among others, the surveyed population reporting unmet medical needs for financial reasons, long waiting lists or distance (29.1% in 2025) <sup>(3)</sup>).

2. Under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the Greek recovery and resilience plan (RRP) includes reforms and investments to strengthen the healthcare sector. As the Commission explained in its reply to Parliamentary Question E-004260/25 <sup>(4)</sup>, the implementation of RRFs falls under Member States' responsibility <sup>(5)</sup>. The Commission verifies the fulfillment of milestones and targets of measures included and funds are disbursed only after a positive preliminary assessment of payment requests <sup>(6)</sup>. The Commission services regularly conduct implementation audits, so does the European Court of Auditors. During the discharge procedure, the European Parliament reviews the Commission's management of RRF funds to ensure accountability for the performance-based disbursement of grants and loans.

3. In its replies to Parliamentary questions E-001242/25 <sup>(7)</sup> and E-000269/26 <sup>(8)</sup>, the Commission explains the Commission's work in workforce shortages and equal access to healthcare.

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<sup>(1)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=en>.

<sup>(2)</sup> [https://health.ec.europa.eu/state-health-eu\\_en](https://health.ec.europa.eu/state-health-eu_en).

<sup>(3)</sup> Self-reported unmet needs for medical examination due to financial reasons, long waiting list or distance by sex, age and risk of poverty threshold — % of the persons having the same needs: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth\\_silc\\_08b/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_silc_08b/default/table?lang=en).

<sup>(4)</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-004260-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-004260-ASW_EN.html).

<sup>(5)</sup> The principal responsibility of taking appropriate measures to protect the EU financial interests and to ensure that the use of funds complies with EU and national law lies with the Member States, as provided by Article 22 of the RRF Regulation.

<sup>(6)</sup> Similarly, measures implemented under the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund are delivered under shared management.

<sup>(7)</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001242-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-001242-ASW_EN.html).

<sup>(8)</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2026-000269-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2026-000269-ASW_EN.html).