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Answer given by Ms Lahbib

on behalf of the European Commission

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Member States have the primary responsibility for civil protection and for providing disaster-management systems, including response operations. The Commission has a supporting competence in the areas of prevention and preparedness. The Union Civil Protection Mechanism finances projects, deploys experts on request to assess the risks, provides advice and supports local or national authorities¹. In this context, Greece didn't request specific support from the Commission to address their Helicopter Emergency Medical Services system.

The 2021–2027 Cohesion Policy cofinances the Greek programme 'Civil Protection'², with EUR 237 million signed for the procurement of six medium helicopters for firefighting operations and other missions, including aerial rescue and medical evacuations, as well as specialised medical equipment for patient transport (ambulance containment units). The programme has also allocated EUR 57.5 million to support dual-use equipment and systems, including for aeromedical evacuation. Moreover, under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the Greek Recovery and Resilience plan includes the procurement of two medium utility helicopters for medical use, supporting emergency evacuation and crisis response.

In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the Commission has defined, together with Member States, operational standards for operational capacities which are registered in the European Civil Protection Pool³ but it does not intend to promote common European guidelines or minimum standards for airborne mountain rescue.

¹ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection_en.

² <https://civilprotection-program.gr/en/quot-civil-protection-quot-programme-2021-2027/>.

³ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/european-civil-protection-pool_en.