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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.8.2026)

In accordance with Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU¹, the responsibilities of the Member States include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them.

The EU's role is to support them in strengthening their health systems through funding, policy guidance, encouraging cooperation and exchange of best practices via technical assistance. Analysis, including under the European Semester, identified persistent shortages and uneven distribution of health professionals in Greece, hampering access to healthcare². Hence, the 2026 Council country-specific recommendation to Greece highlighted the need to tackle shortages of nurses and doctors³.

The Recovery and Resilience Facility, as a temporary instrument (2020-2026), was established to help Member States address the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath by promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion through reforms and investments⁴. The Greek recovery and resilience plan includes several reforms and investments to strengthen its healthcare system, such as a reform of the primary health care system and the personal doctor reform⁵. Their long-term sustainability will be important to maximise lasting impact.

The Commission also supports Member States in addressing this challenge through EU4Health initiatives on health workforce planning⁶, retention of nurses⁷, improvement of mental health of health workers⁸.

Without prejudging the outcome of the negotiations, the Commission's proposal for the next multiannual financial framework also provides for funding opportunities on health.

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

² Country Health Profile: Greece, 2025: https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/b9b4092c-b357-4ae3-8d82-d9a252e7e159_en?filename=2025_chp_gr_english.pdf.

³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/07/10/european-semester-2026-council-adopts-country-specific-recommendations/>.

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/241/oj/eng>.

⁵ Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan: https://reforms-investments.ec.europa.eu/recovery-and-resilience-facility-1/country-pages/greeces-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en?prefLang=es.

⁶ EU4Health Programme: <https://www.agenas.gov.it/ricerca-e-sviluppo/ricerca-internazionale/personale-sanitario-ri/heroes-health-workforce-to-meet-health-challenges>.

⁷ EU4Health programme, 2024: https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/2024-eu4health-work-programme_en.

⁸ <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/WHO-EURO-2025-12709-52483-81031>.