

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002931/26
to the Commission
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(15 July 2026)**

Subject: Medical preparedness and emergency care services at international airports in the European Union

International airports constitute critical European transport infrastructure, serving millions of citizens and visitors of the European Union every day. Their safe operation requires not only high standards of aviation safety, but also adequate medical preparedness to respond immediately to emergencies.

In 2025, more than 10 million passengers passed through Heraklion's Nikos Kazantzakis International Airport — the second largest airport in Greece — making it one of the EU's busiest gateways for tourism. Despite its particularly high passenger numbers, concerns have been raised about the adequacy of medical staffing and the operational readiness of emergency services. The adequacy of these services is not only relevant for the organisation of national health systems, but is directly linked to passenger safety, the resilience of critical European infrastructure and the effective management of emergencies.

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

1. Are there European guidelines, standards or best practices on medical preparedness and the availability of pre-hospital emergency care services at international airports in the European Union?
2. Does it consider that the adequacy of these services is a factor that contributes to the safety of passengers and the resilience of the EU's critical transport infrastructure?
3. What EU funding tools or programmes can Member States use to strengthen medical preparedness services at international airports serving large numbers of passengers?

Submitted: 15.7.2026

**Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas on behalf of the European Commission
(22 September 2026)**

Medical preparedness is vital for passenger safety and aligns with broader EU objectives on critical infrastructure resilience. At present, the EU does not set harmonised standards for pre-hospital emergency medical services at airports as they fall within Member State competence.

The European Preparedness Union Strategy ⁽¹⁾, the EU Stockpiling Strategy ⁽²⁾ and the Medical Countermeasures Strategy ⁽³⁾ can contribute to medical preparedness at airports. EU Minimum Preparedness Requirements are being developed by the Commission with Member States, with non-binding targets in priority areas. Union Civil Protection Mechanism ⁽⁴⁾ tools include technical assistance, prevention and preparedness projects, also for medical response.

Commission Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 ⁽⁵⁾ requires certified aerodromes to maintain an emergency response plan to ensure effective coordination at or around airports, complemented by Guidance Material from the European Union Aviation Safety Agency.

At global level, the International Civil Aviation Organisation and Airports Council International developed non-binding guidance and best practices regarding integrated medical services and supplies.

Member States may explore several EU funding tools to enhance airport medical preparedness. The EU4Health ⁽⁶⁾ programme supports strengthening health security capacities, preparedness, stockpiling, training and coordination.

During the 2021-2027 period, Cohesion Policy ⁽⁷⁾ is set to invest EUR 336.5 million in Greece to support healthcare infrastructure, access to quality health services and emergency preparedness.

⁽¹⁾ JOIN(2025) 130 final.

⁽²⁾ COM (2025) 528 final.

⁽³⁾ COM (2025) 529 final.

⁽⁴⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 44, 14.2.2014, pp. 1-34.

⁽⁶⁾ Established by Regulation (EU) 2021/522 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 107, 26.3.2021, pp. 1-29.

⁽⁷⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/2021-2027_en.

The European Regional Development Fund ⁽⁸⁾ may also help finance reforms and investments in health system resilience and emergency preparedness.

⁽⁸⁾ In line with Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, pp. 159-706.