

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0337/10  
by Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Absence of funding for programmes for the reintegration of the mentally ill in society

During the last decade, the Commission adopted a raft of programmes promoting a gradual shift away from psychiatric units in Member States and their replacement by mental health and day care establishments to help reintegrate inpatients in the fabric of society. For instance, Greece adopted the ten-year Psychargos programme (1997-2007) which sought to gradually abolish all psychiatric units and replace them by more effective centres and establishments.

However, even though this initiative proved particularly successful while it was being implemented, the Commission failed subsequently to support government efforts by EU Member States. As a result, State budgets are unable to meet the increased spending needs of these centres, and we are witnessing a decline in the mental health of patients, who are seeing deterioration in their living conditions and a return to the tragic situation which existed earlier.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it take the view that the sudden - instead of gradual - suspension of funding jeopardises the viability of the establishments in question and casts doubt on the effectiveness of the Commission's efforts?
2. Does it plan to take fresh initiatives and launch new programmes to support - even on a smaller scale - the reform of the system for treating mental illnesses in EU Member States?
3. Particularly as regards Greece, is there any provision for supporting appropriate programmes so as to prevent the decline of these establishments and to avoid squandering the efforts made during previous years?