

**Question for written answer E-005386/2018
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Mireille D'Ornano (EFDD)

Subject: Austerity and declining vaccination rates

In the first six months of 2018, more than 41 000 cases of measles were recorded in Europe – more than in 2016 and 2017 combined. Worse still, 37 people have died of it. According to *The Guardian*: 'Last year there were nearly 24 000 [cases] [...] the highest count in any year of the last decade.' This increase is often attributed to the growing mistrust of vaccinations. However, fiscal austerity is rarely mentioned, despite perhaps also coming into play. Indeed, the scientific journal *European Journal of Public Health* describes how the regions of Italy in which the health budget has been cut are also the regions with the lowest vaccination rates. It is estimated that on average, for every 1% reduction in public health spending per person, vaccination rates decrease by 0.5%. Veronica Toffolutti, a health economist from Milan, says that the budget cuts were mostly in preventive care. As in Italy, Greece has made significant budget cuts since the 2008 financial crisis.

1. Will the Commission confirm that there is a link between austerity, decreasing preventive care, and declining vaccination rates?
2. How does it intend to address this austerity imposed on the countries concerned?