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Answer given by Mr Schmit
on behalf of the European Commission
(28.4.2021)

The Commission is fully aware of the difficult situation in Greece, where employment prospects have deteriorated for large swathes of the population, and has assisted Greece in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on the labour market. Through the temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) instrument¹, Greece has secured funding for its short-time work scheme SYN-ERGASIA, and the European Social Fund (ESF) has co-financed income support for the self-employed.

The public service programme of 2020 in question, which is co-funded by the ESF, is part of the active labour market policies (ALMP) implemented by the Greek Public Employment Service. It aims at reconnecting the long-term unemployed and vulnerable groups with the labour market and upgrading their skills, thereby increasing their employability. The limited and non-extendable eight-month duration of employment under the programme is in line with the logic and design of such ALMPs. Should the participants need to register again as unemployed after the end of the programme, other activation measures and services will be available to them.

Activation measures in Greece already benefit from important support by the ESF and further substantial funding can be mobilised through the Recovery and Resilience Facility to promote a dynamic, job-rich and inclusive recovery, as encouraged by the Commission Recommendation on an effective active support to employment following the COVID-19 crisis (EASE)².

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/financial-assistance-eu/funding-mechanisms-and-facilities/sure_en

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/commission-recommendation-effective-active-support-employment-ease_en