NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0330/2019 by Marios Achelleos (British) on EU co-financing for the General Health System in Cyprus

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner calls for EU co-financing of the new General Health System in Cyprus to help cope with the influx of large numbers of refugees who are in need medical care.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 30 September 2019. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 18 February 2020

According to Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Union action shall respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. The responsibilities of the Member States shall include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them.

Though the organisation of healthcare systems is the responsibility of Member States, the Commission provides its support through policy co-ordination in the framework of the European Semester to build more accessible, effective and sustainable healthcare systems across Europe. The Commission highlighted major implementation challenges and investment needs in view of the reforms of the health system in Cyprus, with a recommendation for the authorities to take measures to ensure that the national health system becomes fully functional.
in 2020, as planned\textsuperscript{1}.

The new universal health system is a major reform that aims at reducing the high out-of-pocket expenditure, contributing to reducing inequalities and improving access for all. It helps achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 3 to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”.

Cyprus has significantly benefited and continues to benefit from technical support in the preparation, design and implementation of the new system and is encouraged to make use of all opportunities from EU tools and instruments. Moreover, the proposed Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 offers further opportunities for funding across several key EU funds and instruments to support and guide national reforms of health systems\textsuperscript{2}.

Regarding the particular issue of health service provision for refugees/ migrants in Cyprus, the third EU Health Programme (2014-2020) has the aim to complement, support and add value to the policies of Member States, improve the health of EU citizens and reduce health inequalities. However, its legal configuration does not allow co-funding the general health system, as it would be against the letter of Article 168 of the Treaty. The Health Programme has supported the training of health and other professionals to help Member States respond to the specific health needs of migrants and refugees. The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), co-managed by Member States, is designed to respond to extraordinary needs derived from the presence of migrants and refugees and, in agreement with the national government, can be used to supplement the healthcare needs of the national health system. AMIF has been used in Greece and Italy and to a lesser extent in other Member States.

**Conclusion**

The responsibilities of the Member States shall include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them. The Commission therefore has no basis to intervene on behalf of the petitioner.


\textsuperscript{2}https://ec.europa.eu/health/funding/future_health_budget_en