

New study presented at European Health Forum Gastein 2023 reveals urgent need for increased health investment to improve health inequalities and life expectancy in Europe

- *The study “Impact of Underinvestment on Medicines and Health Services. The case of Poland, Romania & Greece” was realized by IPOKE Institute Greece, part of University of Athens, and sponsored by Viatris Europe.*
- *The study showcases underlying risks in further lowering the healthcare budgets associated with chronic under-funding in 3 selected European periphery countries, leading to low quality of life, and high multimorbidity.*
- *The findings of the study emphasize the urgent need for action to redress the imbalance in health between citizens of European periphery countries and the rest of Europe.*

28 September 2023, Bad Hofgastein, Austria - Chronic underinvestment in healthcare in Eastern and Southern European countries over the past two decades has resulted in significantly lower healthy years for citizens compared to the rest of the Europe, according to a recent study presented at the **European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG 2023)**, Europe's renown health policy conference which is held from 26 - 29 September 2023 in Bad Hofgastein, Austria. Its findings highlight the **urgent need for policy action to tackle health inequalities and foster a healthier future for all citizens across Europe.**

“The impact of Underinvestment on Medicines and Health Services. The case of Poland, Romania & Greece” report was realized by the Institute of Political, Economic and Social Research (IPOKE) Greece and commissioned by Viatris Europe; it has been previously made public together with trade associations at regional and local level.

During the EHFG 2023 dedicated session titled **“Health systems in crisis - the case of European periphery countries”**, IPOKE President & project leader of the study, **Professor John Yfantopoulos of the University of Athens** along with a high-level panel, representing policy makers, patient associations and the pharma industry, explored **common approaches and policy interventions to improve access and health outcomes in the European periphery countries.** One of the key conclusions of the discussion was that now is the time to **take actions towards increased healthcare investments and avoid disruption on the healthcare and pharmaceutical market.**

Professor John Yfantopoulos of the University of Athens said: “In line with the European Agenda related to initiatives like “equal access to healthcare for all European Citizens”, increasing healthcare budgets should be ranked highly by the EU Commission agenda. With health becoming a top priority in the political agenda of European governments, and given the current uncertainty in the geopolitical situation, as well as the unfavorable situation related to healthcare outcomes in the European periphery countries, the time is now to take immediate actions towards increased healthcare investments.”

Adrian van den Hoven – Director General of Medicines for Europe, commented during the session that “For years, we have known of inequities in access to medicines depending on where in the EU you live. This report adds the data we need to take policy actions that will concretely help these countries to close the access gap. These inequities are all the more unacceptable when a ready-made solution exists in the smart use of off-patent medicines. We have a track record of doubling patient access to essential medicines, used to treat cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and auto-immune conditions. The review of the pharmaceutical legislation must focus on strengthening and supporting the off-patent medicines sector, given our role as a solution provider for access gaps.”

Study in short:

- Using macro and micro analysis of “big data” sources from 1960 to 2021, the study showcased that **investment in healthcare is not adequate in the 3 countries – Poland, Greece and Romania**, despite their strong economic growth the last 20 years.
- The share of the selected countries’ **GDP investments in health continues to be below the EU27 average** (Greece 9%, Poland 6.5%, Romania 5.7% of GDP, with the EU average being 10%), while these countries experience a **high level of out-of-pocket payments (OOPP) for healthcare** (Greece 35%, Poland 20%, Romania 19% versus 15.3% of the EU average). This has led, in combination with the backlog in health operations created by COVID-19, the cost-of-living crisis, inflation and geopolitical challenges, to significantly less healthy lives and years across all the three countries compared to the other EU countries, thus **deepening the health and socio-economical inequalities between Eastern and Western Europe**.
- It is indicative that Greece is associated with the worst quality of life (QOL) among all EU countries considered - with 1 in 3 Greeks (36%) living a low-quality life-, Poland is in the fourth place in QOL terms and people in Romania live less healthy life years (59.9 years) versus the rest of EU (64 years).
- Citizens of these countries are experiencing **multimorbidity** (notably 6 out of 10 people in Poland suffer from multimorbidity) **as well as high medical unmet needs** (28% of people in Greece, 21% in Romania, 12% in Poland report unmet healthcare needs), which increase over time.

The full study “The impact of Underinvestment on Medicines and Health Services. The case of Poland, Romania & Greece” is available [here](#).

The study will be presented during the [ISPOR Conference](#) in November.

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About IPOKE Research Institute

The Institute of Political, Economic & Social Research (IPOKE) is a non-governmental research organization based in Athens, Greece. The founding members of the Institute are University Professors and Researchers with wide experience in teaching, training, and conducting international comparative research. We are specialized in providing consulting services in the fields of Health Economics, Pharma-Economics, Health Econometrics, Quality of Life, Public Health, and the Socio-economic determinants of Health. Our Scientific Team has extensive expertise in the interface of clinical research and economic evaluation and has published widely in refereed journals. We have extensive experience in developing economic models and applying those models to substantiate policy decisions. At the same time, our modern logistics infrastructure and organization add to our competitiveness and enhance our ability to produce high-quality research.

About Viatriis

Viatriis Inc. (NASDAQ: VTRS) is a global healthcare company empowering people worldwide to live healthier at every stage of life. We provide access to medicines, advance sustainable operations, develop innovative solutions and leverage our collective expertise to connect more people to more products and services through our one-of-a-kind Global Healthcare Gateway®. Formed in November 2020, Viatriis brings together scientific, manufacturing and distribution expertise with proven regulatory, medical, and commercial capabilities to deliver high-quality medicines to patients in more than 165 countries and territories. Viatriis' portfolio comprises more than 1,400 approved molecules across a wide range of therapeutic areas, spanning both non-communicable and infectious diseases, including globally recognized brands, complex generic and branded medicines, and a variety of over-the-counter consumer products. With more than 38,000 colleagues globally, Viatriis is headquartered in the U.S., with global centers in Pittsburgh, Shanghai and Hyderabad, India. Learn more at viatris.com and investor.viatris.com, and connect with us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). For more European information, follow us on [Viatriis EU Policy Twitter](#).

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