

**Question for written answer E-001844/2024  
to the Commission**  
Rule 144  
**Kostas Papadakis (NI)**

**Subject:** New school year is marred by grade/year group section mergers and acute problems

Major problems are once again clouding the start to the new school year as parents and pupils face unacceptable grade/year group section mergers. The mergers come at a time when, as is known, there are serious shortages in teaching and other school staff (cleaning, catering and infirmary staff) and parents are having to dig deep into their pockets again this year to pay for the necessary back-to-school supplies.

The 1 000 or so mergers are supposedly a solution to provide more teachers at a time when Greece faces a shortage of around 60 000 teachers. Only 10 000 have been hired and they were forced to accept on the condition that they will have to undergo an evaluation.

In view of this, what is the Commission's position concerning:

1. The unacceptable school situation that is taking shape in 2024, whereby teachers, parents and pupils are confronted with 'streamlining' efforts – as the Government described the merger in question – that are moving the educational process backwards and are creating two-speed schools based partly on EU cost-cutting guidelines?
2. The fact that each grade/year group section will now have only one special educational needs teaching assistant to support children who have been diagnosed as having learning difficulties, regardless of how many such pupils there are, forcing parents to turn to private tutors and therapists to support their children?
3. The dangerous situation that is developing as a result of a lack of school maintenance and inspections, forcing pupils and teachers to attend lessons in classrooms that are unsuitable in every respect, pedagogically and in terms of safety, with private sponsors being 'drafted into' schools that are becoming increasingly commercialised?

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