



Greece: After more than a year, suspended unvaccinated health workers can return to work in January

Description



GREECE: The Greek Health Minister announced last week that following a court ruling the country would be restoring thousands of health staff who refused to be vaccinated against Covid. The unvaccinated health workers will return to work from 1 January 2023.

Like other countries across Europe, Greece brought in rules during the pandemic requiring staff at hospitals, doctors' surgeries and care homes to be fully vaccinated.

Insider Paper reported that the move enforced a year ago led to some 6,500 unvaccinated staff being side-lined, and was strongly opposed by the main union of hospital workers.

Greece's highest administrative court, the Council of State, called for the measure to be repealed last week, following a complaint brought by the union. It ruled that the extension of mandatory vaccination for health workers until the end of 2022 was unconstitutional because authorities were obligated to have reassessed the necessity of the measure before extending it.

"The ruling will be implemented, though I tell you I think it is a dangerous decision for public health," Health Minister Thanos Plevris told *Mega TV*.

Plevris is reviewing options for a strict protocol of medical staff returning to duty. Among the measures being considered are mandatory weekly or biweekly coronavirus tests (PCR or rapid test), which will be paid for by the health staff themselves. Wearing masks is expected to be mandatory.

Kathimerini daily reported last month that over 2,000 health workers remained unvaccinated and still suspended from work, including some 170 doctors.

by Rhoda Wilson

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