



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Institutional Safeguarding and Independent European Recognition for Shiatsu in Greece: Position Memorandum of the Hellenic Shiatsu Association to the Competent Ministries

With a comprehensive and scientifically substantiated Position Memorandum addressed to the Ministries of National Economy & Finance and Development, the Hellenic Shiatsu Association is taking decisive action in response to the recent legislative developments (Government Gazette A' 64/28.04.2026), clarifying the landscape and claiming the independent institutional recognition that Shiatsu deserves in Greece.

In light of the new regulations concerning “manual massage” premises, the official professional body for Shiatsu in Greece sets out a clear line of distinction.

Shiatsu is not massage. It is an independent, internationally recognised traditional Eastern practice of physical and mental well-being, based on the principles of Traditional Chinese and Japanese Medicine. It is practised with the receiver fully clothed, on a special floor mat (futon), without the use of oils and without contact with bare skin, using exclusively sustained pressure and passive stretches.

The European Identity (ESCO) and the Depth of Training

The intervention of the Hellenic Shiatsu Association brings European standards to the forefront, calling on the Greek State to activate tools that already exist within the Europass system. The profession is fully included in the European Classification of Occupations (ESCO) under code 3255.5, “Shiatsu Energy Therapist”.

This distinction is supported by a highly demanding and structured three-year training framework, based on the standards of the European Shiatsu Federation (ESF). The curriculum covers subjects ranging from Shiatsu practice and Eastern Medicine to Western Medicine taught by physicians, clinical practice, and continuous Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Hospital-Based and Research Evidence in Greece

Far from being an empirical approach, Shiatsu in Greece carries an important clinical and voluntary legacy within public hospital structures, which is presented in detail in the Memorandum:

- **Pain Clinic – Aretaieion University Hospital (2008–2015):** Long-term complementary support for patients with chronic pain, accompanied by scientific presentations at medical conferences (Hellenic Society of Algology, ESRA Hellas, ALGOS), which recorded a significant reduction in pain intensity and anxiety.

• **Pain Clinic – Hippokrateion Hospital of Athens (2017–2020):** A total of 977 voluntary sessions were offered to 583 patients with chronic conditions, including fibromyalgia and musculoskeletal pain, as well as within the demanding environment of medical and nursing staff, with excellent results in terms of well-being and relief.

At the international level, the position of Shiatsu is further strengthened both by the major cross-national study conducted by the University of Leeds in 2007 and by the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO Report 2019), which recognise complementary methods as a vital part of public health and citizens' self-care.

What the Hellenic Shiatsu Association Proposes

Guided by modernisation, public safety, and the protection of professionals, the Association calls on the State to engage in an open dialogue on:

1. **The establishment of a specialised Activity Code (KAD)** for “Well-being Education Services Provided by Shiatsu Practitioners”, in order to fully distinguish Shiatsu from classical massage.
2. **The examination of inclusion under a VAT exemption regime**, as recognition of its particular nature as a complementary practice of self-care and harmonisation, in line with European practice.
3. **The creation of a National Certification through EOPPEP**, based on European criteria and ESCO codes.

Shiatsu constitutes an independent and evidence-informed field of holistic care. The Hellenic Shiatsu Association remains at the disposal of the authorities to contribute its expertise, with the aim of establishing a fair, clear, and European institutional framework.

For more information:

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