

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-005424/18**  
**to the Commission**  
**Manolis Kefalogiannis (PPE)**  
(23 October 2018)

**Subject:** Disasters caused by extreme weather conditions in wine-growing areas

Several parts of Greece, including Heraklion in Crete and Kavala, have recently been affected by extreme weather mixed with heavy and continuous rainfall and hail.

As a result, many farmers are in despair, having lost much of their production in the run-up to harvesting. Wine growers in particular, in addition to the serious damage they have already sustained, are being forced to contain the damage to their remaining crops by 'throwing away' part of their production as a result of secondary diseases or other problems (damaged fruit).

The situation in the abovementioned regions is particularly grave, since farmers have already sustained considerable financial losses as a result of the generally unfavourable economic environment.

Can the Commission say:

In addition to funding from the national system of compensation payments, what other assistance can be given to farmers badly hit by the prolonged rainfall and hailstorms?

Can farmers who have sustained losses be given preferential access to investment schemes under the Rural Development Programme?

**Answer given by Mr Hogan on behalf of the European Commission**  
(7 January 2019)

Through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) <sup>(1)</sup>, Member States may provide support to restore agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters, and may support risk management schemes, through contributions to crop, animal, and plant insurance premia, compensation from mutual funds and/or contributions to an income stabilisation tool.

The current version of the Greek Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP) provides for support to restore damaged agricultural production potential <sup>(2)</sup>, but not for risk management measures. If Greek authorities consider it appropriate, they can also propose adjusting the current selection criteria of the investment measures in the RDP and give priority to farmers affected by natural disasters.

State aid may be granted in line with the European Union Guidelines for state aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014-2020, as it was done through the state aid scheme SA.45002 (2016/N), established by Greece in 2016 and earmarked for the compensation of losses brought about by natural disasters and adverse climatic events.

Another possibility is to grant *de minimis* aid (up to EUR 15 000 per beneficiary over a period of three fiscal years), in compliance with Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 <sup>(3)</sup>.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013

<sup>(2)</sup> With the exception of annual plants

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ L 352, 24.12.2013.