

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-001201/24
to the Commission
Theodoros Zagorakis (S&D)
(23 April 2024)**

Subject: Support for crop growers in Chalkidiki following extreme weather conditions

Hailstorms in the wider area of the Municipality of Nea Proponitida in Chalkidiki have caused massive damage/destruction to cereal crops, vines, apricot and olive trees, fruit and vegetables. The hailstorms destroyed most of the cereal crops, which had already been damaged by prolonged drought. Olive production met a similar fate. After two years of successive crop failures with no financial support provided whatsoever, olive trees were in the pre-flowering stage when the hail storm hit, a damage-causing factor that is not included in the insurance cover. Many apricot varieties in Chalkidiki were completely wiped out, while in the viticulture sector more than 70%-80% of crops, especially table grape varieties, were lost as a result of the hailstorms.

It should be noted that, for reasons that remain unclear, Chalkidiki does not currently have any aerial or ground-based hail protection system that would help limit the damage to the bare minimum.

In view of this, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Can financial support from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, among others, be given to crop growers to compensate for their losses, especially to cover losses caused by factors that are not covered by the insurance?
2. Can the Greek Government decide in this case to provide state aid in line with current state aid rules or on the basis of the *de minimis* Regulation?
3. Does the Greek rural development programme provide for preventive actions and the adoption of risk management measures in such cases?

Submitted: 23.4.2024

**Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski on behalf of the European Commission
(17 May 2024)**

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) does not provide compensation for losses. However, interventions for the restoration of agricultural or forestry potential damaged by natural disasters as well as for preventive actions could be supported if envisaged by the Member State in the national Rural Development Programme or Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan.

Moreover, in the case of adverse climatic events which can be assimilated to a natural disaster, national authorities may also grant, under certain conditions, support to farmers from their national budget in line with EU State aid rules ⁽¹⁾.

Depending on identified needs and national strategy, Member States may also implement — under the EAFRD — risk management interventions.

The latest version of the Greek CAP Strategic Plan ⁽²⁾ does foresee relevant risk management interventions including types of interventions specific to certain sectors like fruit and vegetables, wine etc ⁽³⁾ that can be employed for this purpose as well as an intervention for investments in preventive actions for permanent crop following natural disasters and catastrophic events which may also be relevant in the current and in future similar cases.

⁽¹⁾ Guidelines for state aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2022/C 485/01, OJ C 485, 21.12.2022, p. 1; Commission Regulation (EU) 2022/2472 declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, OJ L 327, 21.12.2022, p. 1; Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid in the agriculture sector, OJ L 352, 24.12.2013 p. 9.

⁽²⁾ <http://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/el/keimeno-synimmena-paa/egkrisi-tropopoiiseis>

⁽³⁾ Subsidy of optional insurance premium as defined in Article 76 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 and types of interventions for certain sectors as provided under Article 47(2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115.