

Question for written answer E-003196/2018
to the Commission
Rule 130
Sotirios Zarianopoulos (NI)

Subject: The intolerable working and living conditions of farm labourers in Manolada

The fire that destroyed the camp of hundreds of migrant farm labourers in Manolada, Ilia, on 7 June 2018 once again highlighted the appalling conditions under which these people work and live. Any attempts by the government at remediation do not change, but rather perpetuate, the situation.

Typically, this involves working from morning till night, without breaking even for water, in inhuman conditions of oppressively high temperatures, inhaling pesticides, working without pay, and a reduced daily wage (the official wage of EUR 25 in reality falls to EUR 18); illegal, extortionary withholding of migrant farm labourers' papers by employers, and abhorrent stacking of hundreds of people in make-shift accommodation without minimal hygienic amenities (e.g. water, toilets, etc.).

Note that, a few years ago, labourers in Manolada were the target of a murderous shooting attack by people working for their employers, following which the Greek justice system found the perpetrators innocent.

Similar conditions prevail in other camps/sweat shops in Greece, and in other Member States (such as Foggia in Italy).

This has become a generalised practice in the agricultural sector, where the European Union's agricultural policy of uprooting self-employed farmers and concentrating on large agribusiness has imposed inhuman labour conditions where labourers and self-employed farmers are the victims.

Can the Commission say what its position is on the intolerable situation of farm labourers?