

**Question for written answer E-003822/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)**

Subject: Schoolroom shortage in Thessaloniki

In 2017, the municipality of Thessaloniki signed contract No 84.750 (Serapis 2015-0267) with the European Investment Bank for municipal infrastructure project funding.

The annex to the contract explicitly states that projects eligible for funding include the 'construction of new school buildings' where 'the investment cost includes the land' on which the school is to be built.

Thessaloniki is currently struggling massive shortages of school premises, with thousands of pupils being crammed in classrooms with over 25 occupants, despite health warnings of the need to avoid overcrowding due to the pandemic.

Many properties appropriated for the construction of schools may now no longer be usable for this purpose, however. The Thessaloniki municipal authorities are now claiming to be unable to meet the compensation payments as recently required by law, thereby worsening an already alarming schoolroom shortage, maintaining that

property acquisition for the construction of schools is not eligible expenditure under their contract with the EIB, which

operates under the supervision of the European Commission and European Central Bank.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say whether compulsory purchase payments to property owners for school construction purposes constitute eligible expenditure under the contract between the EIB and the municipality of Thessaloniki?
2. What view does it take of the need to provide funding for school premises in neighbourhoods where they are very much at a premium, with resulting health risks for pupils and teachers due to the coronavirus and other factors?