

**Question for written answer E-003986/2021  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)**

**Subject:**     Devastating fires in Achaia and Rhodes

Over 168 forest fires occurred in the last week of July and in the first days of August in several areas of Greece, with Achaia and Rhodes sustaining massive fire damage.

In Aigialeia, 16 people were injured, homes destroyed and an area of 300 hectares consumed by flames, causing serious damage to olive groves and raisin vineyards. In Rhodes, initial reports indicate that over 1 000 hectares of land have been destroyed by fire, a situation compounded by extensive power outages and extremely high temperatures. Residents had to be evacuated in both areas and in certain cases victims were left for hours without even the basic necessities.

EU 'solidarity' in such desperate situations is limited to sharing and redistributing meagre RescEU resources between Member States that are often having to combat many fires at once. Most of the time, the assistance arrives too late.

In the light of this, what view does the Commission take of calls for :

1. the immediate deployment of EU 'Solidarity Fund' resources without imposing unacceptable conditions, in order to ensure full compensation for victims;
2. action to fully meet the needs of firefighting and forestry services in Greece and all other countries, in in terms of permanent staff and rescue gear, to be administered under the sole responsibility of the national authorities;
3. integrated forest management and protection under the responsibility of the national authorities, putting an end to the irrational division between forest protection and forest firefighting services and privatisation of the latter?