

**Question for written answer E-005326/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Alex Agius Saliba (S&D)

Subject: Financial assistance to Member States affected by climate change

Pollinators play a vital role in creating and maintaining the habitats and ecosystems that many animals rely on for food and shelter. However, in recent years there has been evidence of a considerable decline in pollinators. The decline does not have one single cause and climate change is one of the main factors, with rising temperatures and extreme weather events playing a major role.

For instance, in Malta, there are clear signs that bees are starving. It has been noticed that pollen cells in bee hives do not always contain pollen. This issue is definitely caused by a lack of pollinating plants and the removal of species that are food sources for bees. Another serious issue affecting local bees is the growth in the number of alien insect species, such as oriental hornets. These hornets are a danger to both bees and humans.

The lack of rain on the Maltese islands last year also damaged the local ecosystem. Reduced rainfall led to a cycle where fewer plants produced pollen, which also meant there was a drastic reduction in the amount of honey that was produced.

In the light of the above, can the Commission say whether a Member State affected by climate change can receive financial assistance in such force majeure situations in order to help local beekeepers and support local ecosystems?