

**Question for written answer E-002434/2023/rev.1  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Ignazio Corrao** (Verts/ALE)

**Subject:** Arson in Sicily in 2023: regional executive's failure to take action to tackle the issue and systematic violation of EU law

In Written Question E-002760/2021, the Commission was asked to assess whether the Sicilian regional executive had been negligent or effective in its work to prevent fires, in relation both to Directive 2008/99/EC (Law No 68/2015) and the EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030. Deliberately started, these fires have destroyed vast swathes of the island's woodlands, ravaging over 35 000 hectares in 2022. Over 300 cases have been recorded in 2023. With criminal interests at play behind them, they have been a regular occurrence for the past 25 years or more. The main issue, however, is that the region's preventative efforts have been insufficient (lack of forest management plans, failure to implement the forest fire-fighting plan, delays in carrying out cleaning and maintenance work, downsizing of forestry department, precarious employment for staff, poor monitoring on high-risk days, failure to purchase fire-fighting equipment and acquisition of unsuitable drones). There is ample evidence that the Sicilian regional executive has, for years, sat idly by, leaving the field open to criminal activity.

In view of the above, can the Commission state:

1. What measures it intends to take in response to this clear and systematic breach of EU law?
2. Whether it is possible to use the EU Civil Protection Mechanism for fire emergencies in Sicily and, if so, how?

Submitted: 23.8.2023