

**Question for written answer E-003237/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Elena Kountoura (The Left)

Subject: Measures to address the impact of natural disasters on tourism in affected areas of Greece

The September floods that swept through Thessaly, Evia and other parts of Greece wrought incalculable damage that brought devastation to local communities and are continuing to cause despair among local residents, farmers, livestock farmers and professionals. The compensation promised by the Greek government is not sufficient to cover the unimaginable damage incurred. The tourism sector in Magnesia¹ is a case in point – it is still suffering losses on multiple levels. The tourism accommodation sector has suffered tens of thousands of euros worth of losses as a result of equipment and consumables being destroyed. Seasonal businesses were suddenly forced to close. Even those that stay open during the winter season and are accessible by car have low occupancy rates, receive booking cancellations constantly in addition to requests for deposit reimbursements, all of which threatens their financial viability².

In view of this, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What EU funding is available and how much funding has gone into supporting freelancers and SMEs, including in the accommodation sector and tourism businesses in Greece?
2. What is the situation with regard to the absorption of these funds in 2023, especially in Magnesia and in Thessaly as a whole, and what relevant requests have been made by Greece to date?
3. Does the Commission intend to propose new funding instruments, including a new fund to support freelancers and SMEs in the tourism sector, in order to deal with the effects and the damage caused by such disasters in the future?

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¹ The Region of Thessaly, with 549 hotel units (29 137 beds), accounts for 5% of the country's hotel units and 3% of beds. Almost half of Thessaly's hotels are located in Magnesia, which has 256 units and around a third of the region's beds (9 208). The picture is similar with rooms for rent: Thessaly accounts for 6% of the country's room-for-rent units (1 693) and beds (25 380). Most of these are located in Magnesia, which has 1 330 room-for-rent units (20 037 beds). https://insete.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/22-12_Thessaly.pdf.

² Statement by the Magnesia Hoteliers Association, 25.10.2023 <https://www.ertnews.gr/perifereiakoi-stathmoi/volos/se-apognosi-oi-ksenodoxoi-tis-magnisias/>