

**Question for written answer E-001675/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Elena Kountoura (The Left)

Subject: Measures to address water scarcity – need for EU initiatives and new financial instruments to assist Greece and other southern European countries

In recent years, water scarcity has been a threat to the Mediterranean region,¹ with unforeseen environmental and socio-economic consequences.

Greece faces an acute problem because of prolonged drought and water scarcity. Lakes have dried up, and a fair number of mainland areas and islands are in a state of emergency. Primary production is shrinking; arable and livestock farmers,² professionals in the processing and tourism industries and local communities as a whole are already affected, as water requirements expand exponentially during the summer season.

Taking into account: (a) the European Commission President's Political Guidelines for the European Commission 2024-2029, which refer to the need for steps to be taken to combat water scarcity in the Member States;³ (b) the need for new initiatives for wide-ranging implementation of innovative and sustainable practices in water resource management (such as desalination, reuse of waste water for irrigation in agricultural production, recycling in the use of water resources in agriculture); and (c) the need to support innovation and digitalisation in the production of agrifood products in order to bring about more effective use of water as an instrument in adapting the farming sector to the climate crisis,

1. What financial instruments are currently available to Member States for the purpose of addressing water scarcity?
2. Is the Commission planning to propose new financial instruments for countries disproportionately affected by the climate crisis in the forthcoming 'Climate Adaptation Plan' and the new 'European Water Resilience Strategy'?
3. Is it preparing new initiatives to assist professionals in the primary sector and in the processing and tourism industries?

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¹ Drought is a serious challenge for many European Union countries, particularly in southern Europe and the Mediterranean regions, where climate change is exacerbating extreme weather conditions. Some Member States, such as Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, Malta and Portugal, have been disproportionately hard-hit by drought.

² Heatwave conditions in Greece have led to heavier demands from farmers, and the protracted drought has drastically reduced the volume of water available in irrigation networks.

³ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf