

Question for written answer E-001912/2024

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: Are the EU's instruments and mechanisms for agriculture fit for purpose in the face of protracted droughts?

High temperatures continue to devastate the EU. Destructive fires, heatwaves and severe droughts – worsened by reduced rainfall – are creating unprecedented challenges for agriculture.

In Romania, 2.5 million hectares – specifically, 40 % of wheat, corn, rapeseed and sunflower crops – were compromised by drought in 2024¹. The July drought report from the Joint Research Centre shows that Sicily lost 25 % of its agricultural production, with EUR 2.7 billion in drought damage², while parts of Spain imposed water restrictions of up to 80 % for crop irrigation and 50 % for livestock³. Greece faces devastating fires again, having lost 120 000 hectares⁴ and up to 80 % of livestock in 2023⁵. Poland is also experiencing drought and in 2023, 290 000 farmers were affected⁶.

Such dramatic examples illustrate the new reality of agriculture. Eurostat indicates that Romania, Italy, Spain, Greece and Poland are among the top 10 Member States that produce 85 % of basic EU foodstuffs. Faced with consecutive dry years, the future of food security looks worrying.

1. What information does the Commission have on the EU agricultural and economic impact of the decline in agricultural production and agri-food exports?
2. What long-term measures will be implemented to help farmers, the agricultural sector, rural areas and trade to face these challenges?
3. How will the Commission guarantee food security?

Submitted: 2.10.2024

¹ <https://www.zf.ro/companii/seceta-a-produs-pagube-de-1-5-1-8-miliarde-de-euro-ministrul-22466064>.

² Joint Research Centre, JRC MARS Bulletin Vol. 32 No 7, 'Crop monitoring in Europe – July 2024', 22 July 2024.

³ <https://www.awe.international/article/1860170/catalonia-takes-measures-tackle-the-worst-drought-record>.

⁴ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/25/all-my-fortune-was-there-fires-devastate-greek-livelihoods-and-wildlife>.

⁵ https://www.lemonde.fr/en/environment/article/2023/08/17/greece-s-volos-region-struggles-to-rebuild-after-devastating-fires_6095837_114.html.

⁶ <https://www.agroberichtenbuitenland.nl/actueel/nieuws/2024/06/02/poland-fewer-carrots-due-to-drought>.