

**Question for written answer E-002643/2024/rev.1
to the Commission**
Rule 144
João Oliveira (The Left)

Subject: Bluetongue epidemic – challenges facing sheep farmers in Portugal

Sheep farming in Portugal has been severely hit by the bluetongue virus epidemic, which, according to the National Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives and Agricultural Credit of Portugal, ‘has wiped out thousands of sheep across the country and could spread to bovine animals’.

According to the National Confederation of Agriculture (CNA), ‘data from the system on the collection of the cadavers of animals that die on farms (SIRCA) show that the disease is out of control and containment measures are needed right away’.

There are also concerns that SIRCA could collapse.

Both bodies are calling for an immediate and free vaccination campaign and for extraordinary support to cover animal losses, as well as treatment and prevention costs, given that the costs arising from this situation are beyond the means of the vast majority of farms.

As farmers face an unanticipated decline in livestock numbers, the CNA is also warning about the risk of them being penalised by the blanket application of rules under the common agricultural policy (CAP).

In view of the above:

1. Is the Commission aware of a request from the Portuguese Government for the deployment of resources to this end?
2. Will it allow measures adapting the CAP rules to avoid penalising farmers affected by a decline in livestock numbers?

Submitted: 23.11.2024