

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001908/24
to the Commission
Yannis Maniatis (S&D)
(1 October 2024)**

Subject: Financial support for tourism businesses in disaster-stricken Magnesia

After storm Daniel hit in September 2023, extensive parts of the Region of Thessaly were ravaged by floods, which caused severe damage to infrastructure and businesses. On top of this, towards the end of August this year, thousands of dead fish washed up on the shores of the Pagasetic Gulf causing a major environmental disaster, which brought the area to its knees and drove tourists away. The tourism sector, a mainstay of the local economy, in particular Magnesia's economy, now finds itself in a critical situation as businesses are unable to return to business as usual without direct financial support.

Given how serious and urgent a matter this is, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Will it deploy available financial instruments to provide direct support to tourism businesses in Magnesia that have been affected by Storm Daniel and the dead fish in the Pagasetic Gulf?
2. Is it considering the possibility of giving priority funding from European programmes to activities focused on rebuilding and strengthening the tourism sector in the regional unit of Magnesia?
3. What steps will it take to ensure the viability of tourism businesses in areas such as Magnesia that are affected by environmental disasters, bearing in mind the increasing risk posed by climate change?

Submitted: 1.10.2024

**Answer given by Ms Ferreira on behalf of the European Commission
(19 November 2024)**

In November 2023, Greece requested EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) assistance for the storm 'Daniel' to cover part of the costs for emergency and recovery operations incurred by public authorities ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾.

The Commission approved the application, paying an advance of EUR 25.4 million in February 2024, with a balance of EUR 76.1 million due by year-end.

Private damage is not eligible under the EUSF. Greece has not applied for EUSF assistance for the ecological catastrophe resulting in masses of dead fish appearing in the Pagasetic Gulf.

Through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, EUR 600 million ⁽³⁾ are planned for the restoration and resilience of the road and railway networks in the areas affected by the storm.

Under the 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy Funds, some EUR 150 million have been allocated to support the disaster management system addressing the results of the floodings in some Greek regions ⁽⁴⁾.

Additionally, around EUR 13 million from the 'Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation' programme aimed to support enterprises' adaptability and workers affected by the floods in these areas.

Under 2021-2027 programming period, almost EUR 2.7 billion from the European Regional Development Fund is available to support small and medium-sized enterprises in Greece, including in tourism (out of which EUR 37 million in the 'Thessaly Programme').

In addition, some EUR 160 million have been allocated for support of sustainable tourism assets (out of which EUR 4 million in the 'Thessaly Programme'). The tourism ecosystem can also receive indirect support ⁽⁵⁾.

However, under the shared management and subsidiarity principles governing Cohesion Policy funds, the selection and implementation of specific projects fall under the responsibility of the Member State.

⁽¹⁾ For example, the recovery of essential infrastructure, provision of temporary accommodation to the population, cleaning-up operations, and protection of the cultural heritage.

⁽²⁾ All amounts of this reply refer to public expenditure.

⁽³⁾ Under the Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan, EUR 500 million in grants have been allocated planned for the restoration and resilience of the road and railway networks in the areas affected by storm 'Daniel'.

⁽⁴⁾ From the 'Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development' programme.

⁽⁵⁾ For example, under social inclusion, integrated territorial development in urban and non-urban areas and general business support (including for digitalisation, energy efficiency, greening, extroversion).