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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(28.2.2025)

Acknowledging the important role of firefighters and civil protection services, the Commission respectfully notes that EU law does not require making all seasonal firefighters permanent. In particular, the requirement to prevent abuse of fixed-term contracts under the Framework Agreement on fixed-term work¹ applies only to 'successive' contracts. A contract initiated after a significant lapse of time is not considered successive². Consequently, the employment relationships of seasonal firefighters do not count as abusive.

The report on Strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness by former Finnish President Niinistö, Special Adviser to the President of the Commission, tackles the topic of comprehensive preparedness, building on a whole-of-government, whole-of-society and all-hazards approach, including also climate-related disasters such as wildfires. Noting that prevention and preparedness help mitigating the effects of natural disasters, the report emphasises the key role of firefighters and civil protection services. The EU has a supporting competence in civil protection, complementing national prevention and preparedness efforts where a joint approach is more effective than separate actions, and encouraging cooperation under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism³ to improve the effectiveness of prevention, preparedness, and response efforts against disasters. The functioning and deployment of firefighting services remain the competence of Member States.

Concerning the clashes between seasonal firefighters and police, the Commission deplores violence but cannot comment on the specific incident. It recalls the importance of freedom of peaceful assembly, as guaranteed under the Greek Constitution.

¹ Annexed to Council Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP (OJ L 175, 10.7.1999, p. 43), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1999/70/oj/eng>

² Case C-362/13, *Fiamingo*, par. 71.

³ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en