

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003089/24
to the Commission
Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)
(30 December 2024)**

Subject: The problems of subsistence beekeepers

The problems faced by subsistence beekeepers are becoming more numerous and are making beekeepers' prospects of survival more and more doubtful. Forest fires, floods and drought, combined with prolonged high temperatures, have resulted in a lack of flowering, and therefore pollen, leading to either zero production or extremely reduced levels of production. In addition, the unusual and large increase in the presence of bee predators is interfering with the work of the hives and is also leading to the loss of young queens at the breeding stage.

The ELGA (Greek Agricultural Insurance Organisation) regulation does not provide for full (100%) compensation of any damage, nor does it cover replacing the lost income of beekeepers. At the same time, under EU guidelines, the insurance system is based solely on farmers' contributions, while state financial aid — which provides only meagre assistance — is subject to a number of restrictions.

The lack of controls on the importation and adulteration of honey has resulted in the unchecked selling by traders/importers of cheap imported adulterated 'honey', often marketed as Greek honey, and at prices below the cost of production.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission intend to take measures to fully compensate beekeepers for their lost income and to compensate 100% of the damage to production and beekeeping capital from all natural hazards, bee predators, diseases and illnesses?
2. Does it plan to take measures to reduce production costs for farmers/beekeepers?

Submitted: 30.12.2024

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(19 March 2025)**

The Commission is aware of the challenges facing the sector and is committed to help address them through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Under the CAP Strategic Plans (SP), beekeepers can benefit from apiculture support for investments/actions to improve production and marketing, combat beehive invaders and diseases, prevent damage caused by adverse weather and for restocking of beehives, amongst others.

In addition, rural development (RD) interventions in these plans can also support farmers, including beekeepers, to restore agricultural production damaged by natural disasters and catastrophic events ⁽¹⁾, to introduce appropriate preventive actions and participate in risk management schemes. Further exceptional emergency measures ⁽²⁾ to support farmers affected by natural disasters were adopted in 2024 by co-legislators.

Under the Greek SP for 2023-2027, over EUR 61 million ⁽³⁾ are earmarked for apiculture interventions such as for training and advisory services, to combat beehive invaders, facilitate transhumance and honey analysis to enhance quality and marketing.

Additionally, over EUR 18 million ⁽⁴⁾ are available to beekeepers to introduce and maintain organic beekeeping under an agri-environment RD measure. Other RD interventions are also available for investments to modernise beekeeping and for processing and marketing.

These measures provide timely assistance to farmers/beekeepers to restore their activity, undertake the necessary investments and put in place actions and practices to counteract the hazards and risks inherent to their work; whilst also helping to reduce production costs.

⁽¹⁾ Also open to Greek beekeepers under the Greek CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32024R3242&qid=1735899275178>

⁽³⁾ Public expenditure for the period 2023 — 2027 of which half is Union contribution.

⁽⁴⁾ Public expenditure for the period 2023-2027 of which EUR 16 million is Union contribution.