

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000428/25
to the Commission
Afroditi Latinopoulou (Pfe)
(30 January 2025)

Subject: Spread of sheep pox from the Evros region mainland to Samothrace and lack of preventive measures

Sheep pox, a highly contagious zoonosis that has been present on Samothrace since 1996, has been affecting the island since mid-January 2025, leading to the culling of more than 1,500 sheep and goats, with more expected to be destroyed. The disease spread to the island after first appearing in the mainland region of Evros in August 2024, where tens of thousands of animals have been culled to date. Evros is a gateway to the European Union and there are serious allegations that the sheep pox came from neighbouring Türkiye.

Given that livestock farming is a key pillar of the local economy of both the mainland and the islands:

Does the Commission intend to evaluate the effectiveness of existing animal disease crisis management protocols and propose improvements to the legislative framework?

Submitted: 30.1.2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(10 June 2025)

Sheep pox and goat pox (SGP) control measures at EU level are laid down in Regulation (EU) 2016/429 ⁽¹⁾ and Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 ⁽²⁾. Additional measures for SGP in Greece are laid down in Implementing Decision 2024/2207 ⁽³⁾.

EU measures in response to SGP outbreaks include the killing and disposal of all sheep and goats in the affected establishments, as well as the establishment of restricted zones around them, with movement restrictions for animals and products thereof.

The size, the duration and the specific measures of each restricted zone are adapted so that they are proportionate to each epidemiological situation.

Since the confirmation of SGP in its territory, restricted zones have been established on the island of Samothrace, where exit and entry of sheep and goats are prohibited, to prevent the further spread of the disease to or from the island, to the rest of Greece or to other Member States or third countries.

The Commission is continuously monitoring the implementation of EU rules through audits and evaluating the control measures, ensuring they are risk-based and proportionate, in cooperation with Member States.

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj>.

⁽²⁾ http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2020/687/oj.

⁽³⁾ http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/2207/oj.