

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000569/25
to the Commission
Konstantinos Arvanitis (The Left)
(7 February 2025)**

Subject: Seasonal firefighters

Every year since 2003, without fail, the Greek fire brigade has employed workers in order to cover its permanent and lasting staffing needs. During this time, these workers have been carrying out the same tasks as the fire brigade's permanent staff, covering the service's permanent and lasting staffing needs as a matter of course. Nevertheless, they always seem to be employed under successive fixed-term contracts — a contract type that is not justified based on the needs of these workers either. These employees are well-established and fundamental to the very functioning of the service, which is all the more evident given the fact that some of these workers have more than 20 years of service under their belts. Moreover, due to the undoubtable effects of the climate crisis, the need for the Greek fire brigade (not only for firefighting but also for general responses to any severe and extreme natural phenomenon, flooding, earthquakes, etc.) has increased and is not limited to a specific period of time.

The Greek Government's practice of drawing up successive fixed-term employment contracts for a number of years, without any objective justification, is contrary to the protective provisions of Directive 1999/70/EC ⁽¹⁾.

What measures will the Commission take to ensure that the Greek Government complies with the provisions of Directive 1999/70/EC?

Submitted: 7.2.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(8 April 2025)**

The Commission fully recognises the crucial role of firefighters in the face of increasing challenges linked to wildfires and other natural disasters.

It also underlines that the framework Agreement on fixed-term work ⁽¹⁾ aims to improve the quality of fixed-term work and to prevent misuse of successive fixed-term employment relationships.

The Commission does not have any evidence indicating that the provisions of Greek law transposing the framework Agreement are not applicable to fixed-term firefighters.

If misuse of successive fixed-term contracts occurs in violation of the national transposing provisions, it is a matter to be primarily addressed by the national courts and authorities. In its role as guardian of the Treaties, the Commission may decide to take appropriate action in accordance with the prerogatives conferred to it by the Treaty.

As the Honourable Member refers to 'seasonal' firefighters, the Commission recalls that, according to the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union ⁽²⁾, the fact that two fixed-term contracts are separated by a significant lapse of time is generally sufficient to interrupt an existing employment relationship.

Therefore, in the absence of overriding considerations based on specific circumstances, the framework Agreement does not require Member States to consider such contracts to be successive.

¹ Article 1: 'The purpose of the directive is to put into effect the framework agreement on fixed-term contracts'. Preamble to the framework agreement: 'The parties to this agreement recognise that contracts of an indefinite duration are, and will continue to be, the general form of employment relationship between employers and workers', 'whereas employment contracts of an indefinite duration are the general form of employment relationships and contribute to the quality of life of the workers concerned and improve performance'. Article 2 of the directive: 'Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this directive by 10 July 1999, or shall ensure that, by that date at the latest, management and labour have introduced the necessary measures by agreement, the Member States being required to take any necessary measures to enable them at any time to be in a position to guarantee the results imposed by this directive. They shall forthwith inform the Commission thereof.'

⁽¹⁾ Annexed to Directive 1999/70 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⁾ See Case C-362/13, *Fiamingo*, par. 71.