

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002251/25
to the Commission
Maria Zacharia (NI)
(4 June 2025)

Subject: Greece on course for desertification — need for a special environmental protection scheme

Following successive waves of catastrophic fires, uncontrolled industrial renewable energy installation, the commercialisation of land and the lack of meaningful restoration, nature in Greece is being driven to collapse. Greek forests, flora and fauna are at risk of complete desertification. The region of Attica has lost 37% of its forests over the last eight years, while Euboea, the Peloponnese, Rhodes and Western Greece are facing similar decline. As a Mediterranean country in the front line of the climate crisis, Greece sees its environmental value shrinking dramatically, without an institutional or national protection plan.

Can the Commission therefore say:

1. Does it intend to recognise Greece as a Member State of high environmental vulnerability under Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 on nature restoration?
2. Will it invite the Greek Government to draw up a national map of areas of full environmental protection, with an explicit ban on commercial exploitation reducing the level of green coverage?
3. What financial support is available for targeted reforestation with resistant, endemic species?

Submitted: 4.6.2025

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(30 July 2025)

1. The Nature Restoration Regulation ⁽¹⁾ does not differentiate between Member States based on environmental vulnerability. However, when preparing national restoration plans, Member States may consider regional and local characteristics.
2. According to the EU Biodiversity Strategy ⁽²⁾, it is the responsibility of Member States to designate additional protected areas, to meet the target of legally protecting 30% of EU land and sea by 2030, with one third strictly protected. The Commission regularly invites all Member States to progress on these targets and report new designations to the European Environment Agency ⁽³⁾.
3. In Greece's Common Agricultural Policy ⁽⁴⁾ Strategic Plan 2023-2027 ⁽⁵⁾, EUR 50 million ⁽⁶⁾ EU contribution has been earmarked for preventing and restoring forest damage from fires and natural disasters ⁽⁷⁾, including afforestation and reforestation. Support is also programmed in the Greek Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 ⁽⁸⁾, with EUR 55 million. Under shared management, Greece decides fund allocation, in line with the programme's objectives and priorities. The cohesion policy 2021-2027, allocates EUR 395 million through national ⁽⁹⁾ and regional ⁽¹⁰⁾ programmes for sustainable development aimed at environmental protection, with a focus on climate resilience and biodiversity, including reforestation. Greece's recovery and resilience plan ⁽¹¹⁾ allocates EUR 631 million for reforestation and natural restoration by investing in anti-flood, anti-erosion and fire-prevention actions ⁽¹²⁾. The EU's environment and climate action programme ⁽¹³⁾ can assist in converting or replacing non-native forests to natural habitats. Specific guidance has been published on biodiversity-friendly afforestation, reforestation and tree planting ⁽¹⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869. PE/74/2023/REV/1, OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024.

⁽²⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en.

⁽³⁾ <https://dopa.jrc.ec.europa.eu/kcbd/EUBDS2030-dashboard/?version=1>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy_en.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/category/sskap-2023-2027/sskap-egkrisi-tropopoiiseis/>.

⁽⁶⁾ EUR 60 million total public expenditure.

⁽⁷⁾ Interventions Π13-73-1.3.1 and Π13-73-1.3.2 of the Greek CAP strategic Plan 2023-2027.

⁽⁸⁾ Rural Development Programme 2014-2020: <https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/paa-2014-2020/egkrisis-tropopoiiseis/>.

⁽⁹⁾ <https://peka-program.gr/>, <https://civilprotection-program.gr/>.

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://www.pepattikis.gr/>, <https://www.eydamth.gr/>, <https://www.e-pepba.gr/>, <https://dytikiellada.gr/>, <https://www.espa-epirus.gr/>, <https://www.thessalia-espa.gr/>, <https://peponia.gr/>, <https://eydpelop2127.gr/>.

⁽¹¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility/country-pages/greeces-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en.

⁽¹²⁾ Measure 16849.

⁽¹³⁾ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en.

⁽¹⁴⁾ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1c4561c7-7c54-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1>.