

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002308/25
to the Commission
Galato Alexandraki (ECR)
(10 June 2025)**

Subject: Handling the OPEKEPE scandal

The extensive agricultural subsidy fraud scandal in Greece, uncovered by the European Public Prosecutor's Office, led to a EUR 283 million fine from the Commission on OPEKEPE and calls into question its accreditation as a paying agency. Following investigations into thousands of fake VAT numbers, false declarations of ownership, lack of controls and indications of political cover-up, the Greek Government launched a restructuring plan in cooperation with DG AGRI. In this context, a 12-month restructuring plan for OPEKEPE has been put into effect, which includes its abolition and transfer to the Independent Authority for Public Revenue (IAPR), the full digitalisation of procedures, the reconstitution of the Board of Directors and institutional oversight by the Ministry of Rural Development and Food.

In view of the above:

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the progress of the OPEKEPE reconstruction plan?
2. How does the Commission assess the closure of the organisation and the transfer of payments to the IAPR, and does the Commission intend to impose an alternative management regime (e.g. through the EU)?
3. How is it being ensured that law-abiding farmers will not be deprived of aid during this critical transition?

Submitted: 10.6.2025

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(18 July 2025)**

1. Due to persistent deficiencies identified in the Paying Agency's compliance with accreditation criteria ⁽¹⁾, the Competent authority has placed OPEKEPE's accreditation under probation for a period of 12 months, starting from 10 September 2024. It has also developed an action plan to remedy the deficiencies. The Commission is closely monitoring the implementation of this action plan by analysing periodical reports sent by Greek authorities and conducting audit visits, when necessary. The Commission cannot comment further on ongoing audits.

2. Since the action plan included elements covering the organisational structure of the OPEKEPE, the Commission expected the Greek authorities to implement remedial actions in this area. To date, the Commission has not received official notifications of the decisions regarding the paying agency OPEKEPE since the new legal act is still in preparation. The potential impact of modifications of competences in Greece on the action plan will be closely monitored.

Under the shared management system, if the paying agency's accreditation is withdrawn, it is the responsibility of the Member State to promptly accredit another paying agency to ensure that payments to beneficiaries continue without interruption ⁽²⁾.

3. After applications have been submitted and adequate checks have been conducted, it is the responsibility of the Member States to ensure that payments are fully disbursed to beneficiaries within the deadlines set by Union law ⁽³⁾. When Member States pay farmers outside the deadlines the Commission may apply proportionate reductions concerning EU financing of up to 100%.

⁽¹⁾ Listed in Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2022/127.

⁽²⁾ Article 2(5) of Regulation (EU) 2022/128.

⁽³⁾ Article 38, Article 44 and Article 59 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 — <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2116/oj>.