

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003090/25
to the Commission
Yannis Maniatis (S&D), Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D), Nikos Papandreou (S&D)
(25 July 2025)**

Subject: Extensive spread of sheep pox and goat pox in Greece

Since 2024, Greece's livestock sector has been facing an extremely serious crisis due to the extensive spread of sheep pox and goat pox. So far, 609 outbreaks have been confirmed in critical productive regions of the country, which puts the viability of the sheep and goat farming sector at serious risk. The national production of PDO feta — a product with a high export value and holding a significant share of European markets — is also at imminent risk. Hundreds of farms have had to stop production due to health restrictions, resulting in a lack of sheep and goat's milk.

Despite the critical nature of the situation, the Greek Government's response has been limited: inadequate measures to contain and eradicate the disease, a substandard animal marking and registration system, serious delays in compensating affected farmers and the failure to enforce controls on animal movements.

In view of the above, can the Commission say:

1. Has it received official information from the Greek authorities on both the measures they have implemented and their effectiveness, in relation to the necessary EU obligations, in order to assess Greece's management of the pandemic?
2. Has European assistance been mobilised or scheduled in order to contain the sheep pox and goat pox pandemic in Greece?
3. Are there conditions in place to consider allowing for flexibility in the criteria for granting EU aid to affected livestock farmers to enable their meaningful support?

Submitted: 25.7.2025

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(17 October 2025)**

The competent authorities of Greece have submitted all relevant information regarding sheep pox and goat pox (SGP) in accordance with EU legislation.

This has been done through regular information notes and detailed presentations at the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed ⁽¹⁾.

EU technical support has been consistently provided to Greece through various means, including the EU Reference Laboratory and the EUVET expert team ⁽²⁾ visit from 13 to 16 May 2025.

Additionally numerous bilateral contacts and exchanges of letters with Greek authorities have occurred. Among other recommendations, vaccination, with support from the EU vaccine bank, has been strongly advised to Greece to mitigate the impact of the disease.

Support for SGP surveillance is available in high-risk areas through two EU co-financed programs: TADs and THRACE. Control and eradication measures for sheep pox and goat pox may qualify for EU co-funding at a maximum rate of 30% ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁴⁾ ⁽⁵⁾.

Eligible costs include compensation for certain direct costs, such as the mandatory culling of animals or costs for essential control measures like disinfection.

⁽¹⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/committees/paff-committees/animal-health-and-welfare_en.

⁽²⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-diseases/veterinary-emergency-team_en.

⁽³⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/690/oj>.

⁽⁴⁾ C(2023) 8926 final, Commission Implementing Decision of 21.12.2023 on the financing of the Programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed, and European Statistics and the adoption of the work programme for 2024-2027 https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6150e32-3fa5-4276-923b-a36faf4fec1e_en?filename=C_2023_8926_F1_COMMISSION_IMPLEMENTING_DECISION_EN_V3_P1_3119489.PDF.

⁽⁵⁾ Annex 3 to C(2023) 8926 final, Commission Implementing Decision of 21.12.2023 https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/c69d5f53-6966-420f-8628-7ff84bf91646_en?filename=C_2023_8926_F1_ANNEX_EN_V2_P1_3132789.PDF.

Moreover, exceptional EU support ⁽⁶⁾ may be granted to cover market losses incurred by farmers in areas under movement restrictions. Specific support can also be provided through the Greek Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 ⁽⁷⁾ and the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027 (CSP) ⁽⁸⁾ for investments aiming at restoring agricultural potential following catastrophic events.

⁽⁶⁾ Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1308/2024-11-08>).

⁽⁷⁾ <https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/metra-paa-pages/ependytika-epicheirimatika/>.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/category/sskap-2023-2027/sskap-egkrisi-tropopoiiseis/>.