

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003167/25
to the Commission
Kostas Papadakis (NI)
(1 August 2025)**

Subject: The problem of water scarcity faced by struggling farmers

Farmers in Thessaly, Boeotia and other parts of Greece are confronted with the very acute problem of water scarcity.

Lakes such as Lake Plastiras or Lake Smokovo, which supply irrigation for tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural production, are experiencing extremely low water levels. A small number of farmers have joined the closed irrigation system, while many have turned to costly irrigation 'solutions'.

In the light of this, can the Commission answer the following:

1. What view does it take on the urgent need to implement the demands highlighted by the organised movement of the struggling farmers, who warn of the dire consequences of the lack of comprehensive modern infrastructure and land improvement projects ensuring uninterrupted and sufficient irrigation and that all struggling farmers can stay in their villages, without increases to the price of water or additional 'green' or other charges?
2. What view does it take of the fact that this acute problem of water scarcity and the consequences faced by struggling farmers following the catastrophic floods caused by Storm Daniel are being leveraged by the EU and national governments to drive forward the strategy to commercialise and privatise water, infrastructure and networks, which will cause production costs to soar further?
3. What view does it take of the fact that the promotion of the commercialisation and privatisation of water is being pursued through the dissolution and merger of local and general land improvement bodies and municipal water and sewerage companies throughout Greece, accompanied by designs based on the 'cost-benefit' principle and the involvement of large groups, which will exploit water by means of PPPs, transforming it into an even more expensive commodity?

Submitted: 1.8.2025

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(6 October 2025)**

The Commission shares the concerns over water scarcity in regions that are most acutely affected. Water management is entrusted to the Member States as they are best placed for managing national resources, including the prioritisation of uses in times of scarcity and infrastructure investment and are free to decide on their own property ownership systems ⁽¹⁾. In addition, the EU has gradually built up a common framework regarding water management at the EU level.

First, the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ⁽²⁾ allows the Member States to consider the socioeconomic impacts of the arrangements to recover the costs of water services, including water pricing, as well as the geographic and climatic conditions. Member States can apply different mechanisms to promote access to affordable water services, including social tariffs or progressive block tariffs.

Furthermore, the Common Agricultural Policy ⁽³⁾ provides important support for the farmers. The support could be mobilised for soil improvements, efficient irrigation, water reuse and climate resilient crops ⁽⁴⁾. Cohesion Policy, in turn, supports Member States to improve their public water infrastructures to enhance sustainable water management for human consumption ⁽⁵⁾.

Recently, the European Water Resilience Strategy ⁽⁶⁾ reiterates that access to clean, affordable water is a human right, while recognising the need to curb demand and over-abstractions, as well as improve water efficiency and reuse to avoid supply disruptions.

⁽¹⁾ This neutrality is based on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU, Article 345).

⁽²⁾ Article 9 of the directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1-73, as amended by Commission Directive 2014/101/EU of 30 October 2014, OJ L 311, 31.10.2014, p. 32-35.

⁽³⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy_en.

⁽⁴⁾ Greece's Strategic Plan for the Common Agricultural Policy (2023-2027) — 36.5% of the utilised agricultural area will receive support (under eco-schemes and agri-environment climate interventions) for practices beneficial for soil and water management.

⁽⁵⁾ Cohesion Policy supports does not finance irrigation, but only investments for the provision of water for human consumption.

⁽⁶⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 'European Water Resilience Strategy,' COM(2025) 280, 4 June 2025. The quotes are from page 1 and pages 6-7 respectively.