

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003541/25
to the Commission
João Oliveira (The Left)
(15 September 2025)

Subject: EU aid for Portugal and common agricultural policy options to combat major forest fires

Portugal has again been racked by catastrophic forest fires, killing several people and causing untold damage to property and the environment. Thousands of small-scale farmers and forest producers have seen their assets and incomes go up in smoke, and the sheer size of the fire-ravaged area, some 250 000 hectares this year — a quarter of the area burned in all the Member States together — calls for urgent intervention.

The state of forests, farming and rural areas in Portugal is linked to the impact of the common agricultural policy (CAP), of policies that have had a hand in the closure of 400 farms in recent decades, along with the failure, owing to severe budgetary constraints, of public services and state structures, and the domination of economic groups with regard to the price of wood. Meanwhile, Portugal is facing increasing difficulties — also owing to a paucity of funds — in combating large-scale forest fires.

Given this urgent state of affairs:

What steps, financial means, and political options — including within the framework of the CAP — will the Commission take to support countries like Portugal that have been plagued year after year by the tragedy of major forest fires?

Submitted: 15.9.2025

Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(10 November 2025)

Under the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), through both the 2014-22 Rural Development Programme (RDP) for the mainland and the 2023-2027 CAP Strategic Plan (CSP), EU support has been granted to Portugal for agriculture, forestry, environment commitments, climate actions, and the development of rural areas, for a total of more than EUR 13 billion over 12 years.

In terms of prevention of natural catastrophes including forest fires, there are various possibilities under the CAP and other funds to support the affected Member States in the short, medium and long-term.

CAP interventions are available to support farmers and forest-holders to overcome the effects of adverse weather events, including forest fires, and to mitigate economic losses caused by their negative impacts.

Risk management tools are also available in the CSP to help farmers to manage production and income risks related to their agricultural activity.

Under the Portuguese CSP, support is available for forest fires prevention and restoration of damage including this year wildfires. Portugal may also compensate farmers under EU State aid rules.

Moreover, following the mid-term review of its Cohesion programmes Portugal is activating the new specific objective for regional emergency support for reconstruction ('RESTORE'). Finally, the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) is also available at the request of Member States.

On a longer-term, CAP funded interventions for knowledge transfer are available to assist farmers and forest-holders in building skills and knowledge for climate change adaptation and mitigation, thereby increasing farm resilience.
