

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000022/26
to the Commission
Radan Kanev (PPE)
(7 January 2026)**

Subject: Application of common agricultural policy income support instruments in cases of *force majeure* due to severe climate events

In Bulgaria in 2025, severe frost and freezing led, in some cases, to the total destruction of fruit crops, leaving affected farmers without marketable production or income. The only support provided was partial compensation of production costs under a national state aid scheme, which does not address income loss and may worsen farmers' situation following *force majeure* events.

As per the national guidelines for compensating crop losses caused by adverse climatic events in 2025, areas receiving such aid are excluded from eligibility for coupled income support for the same crops and areas in Campaign 2025 ⁽¹⁾.

Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 ⁽²⁾, notably Articles 3 and 59(5), requires Member States to take account of *force majeure* and exceptional circumstances and to ensure that farmers are not penalised for losses resulting from events beyond their control.

1. Does the Commission consider such exclusions from coupled income support compatible with Articles 3 and 59(5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 in cases of recognised *force majeure*?
2. How does the Commission ensure that national common agricultural policy rules comply with EU law regarding *force majeure* and exceptional circumstances?

Submitted: 7.1.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(11 March 2026)**

Coupled income support addresses structural difficulties that certain targeted sectors face; it does not address income losses due to severe meteorological events.

Nevertheless, *force majeure* events may exempt a producer from certain legal consequences that would otherwise occur in an instance of non-compliance with coupled income support rules.

For example, in accordance with Articles 59, 84 and 88 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 ⁽¹⁾, no penalties are to be imposed and the beneficiary is to retain the right to receive common agricultural policy support where the non-compliance is due to *force majeure* or exceptional circumstances in accordance with Article 3 of the same Regulation. This is relevant in cases such as a severe natural disaster or severe meteorological event gravely affecting the holding.

Whereas the application of *force majeure* is the responsibility of Member States, Member States should take the decision to apply *force majeure* based on relevant evidence and in light of Union agricultural law.

Force majeure is an exception to the general rule of strict respect of obligations. Normally applied on a case-by-case basis, in cases of severe meteorological events that gravely affect a well-determined area, Member States may consider that a whole area is concerned, where it is clear that the farmers in the area are affected by an abnormal event whose consequences could not be prevented with all due care.

Member States need, however, to determine the area at stake and the population affected by the event, in a manner that reasonably allows the presumption that the conditions of *force majeure* are individually met by the farmers concerned ⁽²⁾.

¹ Implementing guidelines for the state aid scheme 'Compensation for damage to agricultural crops caused by adverse climatic events which can be equated to natural disasters' — Campaign 2025 (latest version, additional resource). State Fund 'Agriculture', Republic of Bulgaria, https://www.dfz.bg/documents/d/guest/ukazania_kompensirane-zagubi_prez-2025_dopalnitelen-resurs.

² Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 187, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2116/oj>).

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2116/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ Communication from the Commission to the Council on *force majeure* and exceptional circumstances in Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy, COM(2024) 225 final — <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52024DC0225>.