

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000272/26
to the Commission
Galato Alexandraki (ECR)
(23 January 2026)**

Subject: Institutional transparency and EU supervision in the management of the sheep and goat pox epidemic and related agricultural aid controls

During the period 2024-2025, an extensive sheep and goat pox epidemic was recorded in Greece, with mass animal culling, movement restrictions and serious economic consequences for producers. According to official statistics, more than 430,000 sheep and goats were culled as part of the health measures implemented. These animals mainly belonged to small and medium-sized livestock farmers, established in rural and disadvantaged areas, where livestock farming is the main or even sole source of income.

The crisis was managed exclusively at national level, coinciding with the OPEKEPE scandal and ongoing European audits on the granting of agricultural aid. At the same time, there are significant discrepancies between administration statements and official statistical data regarding sheep and goats. In this light, and taking into account the need to avoid even the suspicion of a conflict of interest between health operations and administrative or financial audits, issues of institutional transparency and independence of procedures are raised.

Accordingly:

1. Does the Commission check consistency between epidemiological data, health decisions and administrative data used for agricultural aid audits and, if so, how does it do so?
2. In cases of significant discrepancies or the coincidence of health crises with aid controls, does the Commission intend to activate some kind of enhanced EU supervision or request the assistance of bodies such as EFSA, OLAF and the European Public Prosecutor's Office?

Submitted: 23.1.2026

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

The Commission conducts audits on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) expenditure to gain assurance that the management and control system put in place by the Member State effectively protects the EU financial interests and that the expenditure complies with EU rules.

Audits verify if the system put in place by the Member State ensures that CAP support is paid only for eligible animals that fulfil all eligibility conditions, including animal identification and registration, where applicable.

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), in its investigative role, is the EU's independent body responsible for investigating matters related to fraud, corruption, and other offences affecting the EU's financial interests.

The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) is the EU independent body responsible for investigating, prosecuting, and bringing to judgment criminal offences affecting the EU's financial interests. Neither OLAF nor the EPPO have a supervisory or assistance role.

Conversely, where Commission services become aware of issues that may fall within the competence of OLAF or the EPPO, the relevant information is transmitted to them without any delay.

While the Commission has mechanisms to address non-compliances with the rules, the management of animal disease outbreaks, under the harmonised legal frameworks provided by the Animal Health Law⁽¹⁾ and the Official Controls Regulation⁽²⁾, and implementation of agricultural aid controls, remain primarily the responsibility of Member States.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law') OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, pp. 1-208.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products, amending Regulations (EC) No 999/2001, (EC) No 396/2005, (EC) No 1069/2009, (EC) No 1107/2009, (EU) No 1151/2012, (EU) No 652/2014, (EU) 2016/429 and (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Regulations (EC) No 1/2005 and (EC) No 1099/2009 and Council Directives 98/58/EC, 1999/74/EC, 2007/43/EC, 2008/119/EC and 2008/120/EC, and repealing Regulations (EC) No 854/2004 and (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Directives 89/608/EEC, 89/662/EEC, 90/425/EEC, 91/496/EEC, 96/23/EC, 96/93/EC and 97/78/EC and Council Decision 92/438/EEC (Official Controls Regulation) (Text with EEA relevance) OJ L 95, 7.4.2017, pp. 1-142.