

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-003369/26
to the Commission
Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)
(29 August 2026)**

Subject: The disastrous handling of the foot-and-mouth epizootic on Lesbos and the abandonment of struggling livestock farmers

The situation on the island of Lesbos is extremely tense, with producers still waiting to be paid.

The policy of the Greek Government and the local regional authority, which is based on the common agricultural policy of the EU, provides for 'flexible adjustments and options for Member States' when these concern monopoly profits and fiscal adjustment.

This policy is irrational and questions the need for the State to take necessary action.

'Prevention'-based reasoning does not hold water given how scantily staffed the veterinary service is. The Government refuses to allow vaccination even though it is being used in Cyprus, for example, and has led to a reduction in herd culls. The EU Veterinary Emergency Team in Lesbos has spoken about the need to develop a (suppressive and protective) vaccination strategy, as France has done, to control lumpy skin disease in cattle.

While Nea Dimokratia spends billions on military equipment to meet its NATO commitments, livestock farmers have not seen a single cent, and there is a significant disparity in compensation between Greece and Cyprus, with the former paying up to EUR 250 per animal while the latter pays up to EUR 420 per animal.

In view of the above, where does the Commission stand:

1. on the dramatic situation in Lesbos and the fact that the Government and the local regional authority are claiming that they are promoting EU policy with tragic consequences such as the ones described?
2. on the differing rates of progress between Greece and Cyprus and the different management and compensation policies adopted by the two countries?
3. on the urgent need to immediately and fully compensate livestock farmers for the entirety of the damage suffered, to secure their lost income and to finance a comprehensive repopulation plan?

Submitted: 29.8.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(21 October 2026)**

The Commission is in close contact with the Greek authorities and provides support ⁽¹⁾. The management of outbreaks, including the decision to implement emergency vaccination, is the responsibility of the competent national authority under the EU animal health legal framework. The EU vaccine bank remains available to support Greece upon request.

Compensation levels and payments to affected farmers are determined by the Member States. EU financial support may be available for eligible disease-control measures under EU law ⁽²⁾.

Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) ⁽³⁾ Member States may support restoring agricultural potential and compensation for loss of production following natural disaster, adverse climatic events or catastrophic event through their CAP Strategic Plans (CSP) as well as exceptional support measures for the affected market to take account of restrictions on intra-Union and third-country trade which result from the application of the control measures. The Greek CSP provides for an intervention which includes financial support for restocking following animal diseases ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Via technical exchanges, the deployment of a Veterinary Emergency Team (EUVET) mission, the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and cooperation with the EU Reference Laboratory for Foot and Mouth Disease.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 153, 3.5.2021, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/690/oj>.

⁽³⁾ Article 73 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02021R2115-20260818>.

⁽⁴⁾ Intervention II3-73-2.5 — Page 1044- <https://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/EGKEKRIMENO-SS-CAP-3H-TROPOPOIISI.pdf>.

In addition, the Greek authorities can provide support to livestock farmers under the Agricultural *de minimis* Regulation ⁽⁵⁾, under the Agricultural Block Exemption Regulation (ABER — Article 26) ⁽⁶⁾ or the Agricultural state aid Guidelines (Part II — Section 1.2.1.3.) ⁽⁷⁾ for the costs of the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases and to make good the damage caused by animal diseases.

⁽⁵⁾ Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid in the agriculture sector, as amended (OJ L 352, 24.12.2013, p. 9).

⁽⁶⁾ Commission regulation (EU) 2022/2472 of 14 December 2022 declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 327 21.12.2022, p. 1).

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 485, 21.12.2022, p. 1.