

**Question for written answer E-002751/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Kostas Papadakis (NI)

Subject: Recruitment of seasonal firefighters and crackdown

For yet another year, following the end of the firefighting season, seasonal firefighters have had to face dismissal by the Fire Service and a brutal crackdown by the government. The Fire Service has 2 500 fewer firefighters at a time when, in November, fires are still breaking out nearly every day, and critical forest projects have been at a standstill for decades. The same people who all summer long were fighting fires alongside the permanent employees are now regarded as unnecessary and are being dismissed. This policy is, of course, not merely a Greek phenomenon, but represents the direction taken by the EU, with 12 Member States 'losing' more than 20 000 firefighters in the period from 2022 to 2023.

In view of the increasing trend to reduce the number of permanent firefighters in EU countries:

1. What is the Commission's position concerning the demand to eliminate the seasonal recruitment of workers, instead making all seasonal firefighters permanent on the grounds that these staff are required to cover the Fire Service's practical needs, which in fact would not be met even if all seasonal firefighters were to be made permanent?
2. What is its position concerning the fact that, according to the Niinistö report, the EU uses the Fire Service and volunteer firefighters as a part of its war preparedness efforts?
3. What is the Commission's view on the policy of the EU and the Greek Government to lay off seasonal firefighters being accompanied by a brutal crackdown, as happened during the mobilisation at the Ministry for Civil Protection in early November, resulting in injuries to many firefighters?

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