



20.8.2024

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0493/2024 by George Liasis (Greek) on alleged maladministration of projects financed by EU funds

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner is complaining about the alleged violation of the right to be heard, of the principle of proportionality in decisions taken by the administration, in the context of the alleged concealment of the mismanagement of EU funds in Greece and the breach of his personal data by the Greek government. He also claims that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union has been violated, specifically Article 21 on non-discrimination. The petitioner adds that this situation is hampering the smooth progress of his business plan, which is being co-funded by the EU, and calls for the case to be investigated.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 10 July 2024. Information requested from Commission under Rule 233(5).

3. Commission reply, received on 20 August 2024

The European Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) is implemented under shared management between the Member States and the Union, which implies that each of them shall be responsible for the management and control of implementation of programmes, in accordance with their respective responsibilities. In this context, please note that Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 in its Article 26 under Title II on Programming, Chapter I on Common provisions on the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), provides that the programmes shall be drawn up by the Member States, or any authority designated by them, in cooperation with the partners referred to in Article 5 of that Regulation regarding partnership.

The local LEADER programmes are implemented in Greece in accordance with Regulation

(EU) 1303/2013 and Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 on support for rural development, by Local Action Groups (LAGs) that are selected through a competitive procedure. When implementing their local strategies, LAGs are obliged to comply with the regulatory requirements as well as those laid down in the RDP 2014-2020, as approved by the European Commission. They are also obliged to set additional eligibility conditions and the required selection criteria, based on their approved strategy, during the procedure for the selection of operations, with a view to better targeting to solve local problems and meet local needs.

The Commission has received and replied to two letters from the petitioner concerning his complaints and allegations about the mismanagement of EU funds by the Greek authorities, and the deficiencies in the management and control system of the Hellenic Republic, including the discrimination and the criminal offences, addressed to the President of the European Commission, Ms Ursula VON DER LEYEN, and to the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr Margaritis SCHINAS. (One of his communications to the Commission was actually a copy of his complaint to the EPPO¹ related to his investment and participation to the LEADER programme of the European Union). According to his allegations since July 2023 he has filed 8 lawsuits before the Greek Courts.

Conclusion

Concerning the allegation of maladministration of Union funds, both the European Union and its Member States have an obligation to protect the Union's financial interests, including against criminal offences. From all the information in the Commission's possession, it appears that the national authorities are best placed, at this stage, to address deficiencies in the management and control system of the Hellenic Republic, including the discrimination and the criminal offences.

¹ European Public Prosecutor's Office