



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Significant reduction in the fruiting of olive trees due to extreme weather conditions
- Information from the Greek delegation

Delegations will find in Annex a note from Greek delegation on the above subject, concerning an item under "Any other business" at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 19 July 2021.

Significant reduction in the fruiting of olive trees due to extreme weather conditions

From February 15 until April 20 of 2021 Greece was hit by five waves of frost, which caused great damage to the primary production. These frost incidents were unique in volume and extend, over the past 15-20 years, and affected almost the entire Greek territory. More specifically, Western Macedonia, Central and Eastern Macedonia, Thessaly and Epirus were hit particularly hard, while serious damage occurred in Central Greece and the Peloponnese. Indicatively, on 17.02.2021 temperatures as low as - 9.7 °C in Amynteo/Florina, -6.8 °C in Agia/Larissa, -7.4 °C in Makrakomi/Fthiotida and -7.9 °C in Levidi/Arcadia were observed.

These unprecedented frost events severely impacted high-yield crops, such as tree crops, fruits, vegetables and cereals.

Particularly for **olive trees**, the main climatic conditions affecting olive production, are:

- (i) the temperature and its fluctuations (minimum, maximum, average during the annual cultivation cycle) especially affect the flowering and fruiting stages, and
- (ii) the rainfall, the height and distribution of which regulate the availability of water in the soil.

During the current olive growing period 2021/2022, the weather conditions that prevailed during the winter months, January-February, as well as in Spring and later on, were characterized by extreme temperature values. The exceptionally low temperatures of the Spring frost events, were followed by the heatwaves of May and June, with temperatures approaching 40°C. These weather conditions, combined with almost no rainfall, occurred during a very sensitive stage in the olive cultivation, the flowering and the fruiting. Under these circumstances, olive trees showed flower fall and fruit fall.

As a result, we are dealing with a dramatic reduction in the production of olives and olive oil, accounting to approximately 70% to 90% of the expected output, in the most affected olive growing areas, notably Crete, Lesvos, Halkidiki, Evia, Fthiotida, South Peloponnese and Fokida.

Consequently, the agricultural income in these areas is shrinking significantly, having serious effects on rural households.

Taking into account that these extreme weather phenomena are the result of the rapid climate change in Greece and its dramatic effects on the natural environment, we request the approval of financial aid for Greece to support the olive and olive oil producers of the specific areas, affected by the extreme weather conditions.
