

Question for written answer E-001878/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
Maria Zacharia (NI)

Subject: The Hellenic Trench in immediate danger!

On 14 December 2023, the environmental organisations Client Earth, WWF Greece and Greenpeace Greece filed an official complaint against Greece for violations of European legislation by granting oil companies rights to explore and extract hydrocarbons in the area of the Hellenic Trench.

The Hellenic Trench is the main habitat for species that are all included in Annex II of the Protocol to the Barcelona Convention Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean, as well as in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. It also falls under the ACCOBAMS agreement with two 'Important Marine Mammal Areas' and has been proposed for designation as a Marine Protected Area, while part of the area's coast has been included in the Natura 2000 network. Finally, Article 21 of the Protocol (Offshore) to the Barcelona Convention imposes special prevention and information measures for mining activities in protected areas.

Recently, the CJEU ruled against Greece in judgment (ECLI:EU:C:2025:121) of 27 February 2025 for the infringement of Directive 2014/89/EU and the failure to draw up a maritime spatial plan and, consequently, the chaos in Greek seas.

In view of the above:

1. What is the status of the complaint?
2. Does the Commission monitor or receive information about the progress of drilling and its impacts?
3. What does the Commission intend to do to protect this very important Natura 2000 protected area?

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