

**Question for written answer E-001786/2026  
to the Commission**  
Rule 144  
**Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR)**

**Subject:** Creating artificial islands in European EEZs to protect our coral reefs

The European Union now has advanced marine monitoring tools, such as Copernicus Marine, EMODnet Seabed Habitats and the European Digital Twin Ocean, while EU law recognises reefs (habitat type 1170), including Mediterranean coral habitats.

Meanwhile, the Nature Restoration Regulation entered into force in 2024, with the objective of restoring at least 20 % of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030.

At the same time, Article 60 of UNCLOS grants coastal states the exclusive right to construct and regulate artificial islands, installations and structures in their EEZ. Internationally, projects such as the Marker Wadden in the Netherlands show that artificial islands can be used to restore ecosystems, improve water quality and support scientific research, while international guidelines for artificial reefs recognise their role in protecting and regenerating marine biological resources.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Has it assessed the legal, environmental and technical feasibility of creating artificial islands or fixed sea stations within Member States' EEZs for the research, surveillance and protection of Mediterranean coral and related reefs?
2. Does it intend to support such pilot projects through LIFE, Horizon Europe or other funding tools?
3. How will it ensure that such infrastructure is included in the EU's maritime policy and in the exercise of Member States' sovereign rights to protect marine ecosystems?

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