

**Question for written answer E-001881/2026
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR)

Subject: Protecting coral reefs in European EEZs

Coral reefs are ‘tropical forests’ that host 25 % of marine life, protect coastlines and support the global food chain.

Although we have the most advanced tools for mapping and monitoring marine ecosystems, such as the Copernicus Marine Service (CMEMS), the MAES initiative and the European Digital Twin Ocean, the Commission stated in 2021 (Ref. E-001607/2021) that mapping of European reefs is incomplete. At the same time, coral reefs continue to deteriorate, while the implementation of the Nature Restoration Law is still ongoing.

Given that, in accordance with Article 56 of UNCLOS, Member States exercise sovereign rights within their EEZs for the protection and management of marine resources and that the EU has exclusive competence for their conservation, issues are cropping up in relation to coordination, operational implementation and the use of available tools.

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

1. What specific measures has it taken since 2021 to fully map reefs within Member States’ maritime zones, including their EEZs?
2. How is it ensured that Member States make use of available Union tools to actively exercise their sovereign rights to protect marine ecosystems?
3. Does it intend to propose binding measures to strengthen the practical implementation of Member States’ rights and obligations in their EEZs, in particular as regards the protection and restoration of reefs?

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