

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002662/24
to the Commission**

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(26 November 2024)

Subject: Fully honouring islands' special situation in the EU

Island regions in the European Union face specific challenges as a result of their unfavourable geographical location, and those challenges have a profound impact on territorial, economic and social development. Owing to their location, those areas face greater difficulties in the provision of essential services and the development of residents' quality of life.

In view of the above and, in particular, with a view to fostering island regions' balanced and sustainable growth:

1. With a view to upholding the principle of supporting islands, whose situation is different to that of mainland territories, what measures will the Commission take in the next financial programming?
2. What initiatives will it take to address island regions' economic and social disparities, and are any specific measures to improve infrastructure and connections being provided for?
3. How will the Commission support island regions in their transition to a sustainable economy, also taking account of climate change?

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(15 January 2025)

EU islands are very diverse and face a variety of different challenges, including varying levels of economic growth and demographic trends. These different needs require tailor-made approaches, covering several EU policies.

For example, EU Cohesion policy is designed to address EU regional economic and social disparities, including in island regions, in cooperation with Member States.

Over the 2021-2027 programming period, the policy supports investments for increased competitiveness, innovation, green transition, better connectivity, and inclusive growth in all EU regions. In addition, Member States can use Cohesion policy territorial tools to address the particular needs of islands.

The Commission also supports the 'Clean energy for EU islands' initiative ⁽¹⁾ to promote and accelerate decarbonisation of islands' energy systems and facilitate exchange of best practices.

Furthermore, the EU's trans-European transport network (TEN-T) policy ⁽²⁾ incorporates the new overarching concept of a European Maritime Space, which aims to strengthen the integration of islands into the European Single Market and advance territorial cohesion.

All of these lessons learned, will feed into the preparations for the post-2027 financial period.

⁽¹⁾ <https://clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu/>

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1153 and (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, OJ L, 2024/1679, 28.6.2024.