(English version)

Question for written answer E-002675/24
to the Commission
Maria Zacharia (NI)
(27 November 2024)

Subject: Systematic lawlessness and immunity in the port of Piraeus

Despite repeated complaints, protests by local residents, previous court decisions and publicity by Greek and international media about the environmental problems caused by the projects of the Piraeus Port Authority (a limited company) in the wider area, and the project to expand the south side of the Piraeus passenger port in particular, this project has still been granted EU funding in the Region of Attica's 2021-2027 programming period under the 'Attica' programme.

This matter has already been reported to the European Investment Bank (ref. SG/E/2019/16), to the EU's Directorate-General for Competition (ref. ARES(2022)5342515), to its Directorate-General for the Environment (ref. CHAP(2022)021023) and to its Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Development (ref. ARES(2023)500698-23.1.2023), however none of these reports have received a meaningful response.

In view of the above:

1. Is the Commission aware of these complaints and/or has it investigated the matter, and what action is it willing to take?

2. Does the Commission consider that, in this particular case, there has been a breach of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste and of the Guidelines on Management of Dredged Materials referred to in Decision IG.23/12 of the 20th Meeting of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention?

Submitted: 27.11.2024

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

The Commission approved in July 2024 the implementation under the programming periods 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 of the major project on the extension of the port of Piraeus to serve cruise ships under the operational programme 'Attica 2014-2020'.

This approval was based on the positive appraisal of the information referred to in Article 101 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 ([1]).

Moreover, the approval occurred after a ruling of the Greek Council of State in March 2023 and a subsequent revision of the environmental terms endorsed by the Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy in September of 2023 ([2]). The Commission is aware of complaints and concerns that had been raised about this project prior to the ruling of March 2023.

According to available information, there is no evidence of any specific infringement of Directive 2008/98/EC for this project ([3]).

However, if the Commission receives documented information that a violation of EU legislation may have taken place and that it points to a structural issue, it will verify the situation with the relevant national authorities and, if needed, will take appropriate action.

Regarding the obligations under an international convention such as the Barcelona Convention, it is the responsibility of the contracting parties to uphold their respective obligations.

([1]) OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320.
([2]) Commission Implementing Decision C (2024)4975 of 9.7.2024.
([3]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3 (Waste Framework Directive).