

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002799/24
to the Commission
Emmanouil Kefalogiannis (PPE)
(6 December 2024)**

Subject: Challenging the Law of the Sea

Two years ago, in its resolution on the situation in Libya, the European Parliament urged the Libyan authorities to proceed with the cancellation of the memorandum of understanding between Türkiye and Libya, which violates the sovereign rights of third States, does not comply with the Law of the Sea and does not give rise to legal consequences for third countries.

In August, the Italian vessel Ievoli Relume undertook to survey part of the seabed believed to be a suitable location for an electricity cable between Cyprus and Crete, focusing on areas near the island of Kasos. This activity comes under the ‘freedom of the seas’ principle and is not to be confused with seabed hydrocarbon exploration, which is a sovereign right.

Türkiye took advantage of the occasion and deployed warships under the pretext of protecting its maritime boundaries with Libya against abuses. The country attempted to obstruct the surveys, adversely affecting the freedom of the seas. Türkiye’s tactics are deeply concerning. The interruption of activities for reasons not based on the Law of the Sea creates a harmful international precedent and we must understand the dangers involved in effectively challenging the Law of the Sea — and in particular when the challenge comes from a NATO member.

In view of the above:

1. What view does the Commission take of Türkiye’s actions, especially following the explicit condemnation of the Turkish-Libyan memorandum on EEZ delimitation?
2. Does the Commission not believe that Türkiye’s act of challenging the Law of the Sea strengthens other revisionist forces?

Submitted: 6.12.2024

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(20 March 2025)**

The EU has repeatedly stated, including at the highest level, that it expects Türkiye to fully respect international law, to de-escalate tensions in the interest of regional stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, and to promote good neighbourly relations in a sustainable way ⁽¹⁾. Türkiye needs to respect the sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all Member States, as well as all their sovereign rights.

Delimitation of the continental shelf and exclusive economic zones should be addressed through dialogue and negotiations in good faith, in accordance with international law, including as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and any dispute settled peacefully, including through the International Court of Justice.

Unequivocal commitment to good neighbourly relations, to international agreements and to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter, as well as abstaining from unilateral actions which run counter to EU interests, violate international law and the sovereign rights of Member States, remains an essential requirement to ensure a stable and secure environment in the Eastern Mediterranean and the development of a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between the EU and Türkiye ⁽²⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57442/2022-06-2324-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>

⁽²⁾ https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/16679fa1-cb73-4481-bc02-e3620b8c6dd3_en?filename=Joint%20Communication%20to%20the%20European%20Council%20-%20State%20of%20play%20of%20EU-Turkiye%20political%2C%20economic%20and%20trade%20relations.pdf